This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Sat

Harbord Sat

& Bidway

Temple

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WINNING THE SOUTHWEST

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Kit Carson

Digitized by Google

WINNING THE SOUTHWEST

A Story of Conquest

BY

GLENN D. BRADLEY

With Seven Illustrations from Photographs

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1912

Digitized by Google

F786
.B8

Copyright
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1912

Published October, 1912

W. F. HALL PRINTING COMPANY, CHICAGO

Digitized by Google

To My Wife

320821

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

THE political and social forces of the region lying west of the Mississippi have not yet been measured. Only as the American nation continues to grow do these forces assert their vital importance in shaping the destiny of this Republic. And who can gainsay the might of the Southwest as a vitally integral part of our national domain? Hence a story of the acquisition of this great section, the Southwest, seems worth while.

The expansion of empire is always fraught with romance. No literature of any race can surpass in human interest the story of the advance of the Anglo-Saxon across this continent. It is with the acquirement of that great area called the Southwest that this little book briefly deals.

No attempt has been made to give an exhaustive, sequential account of this conquest. Adequately to produce such a work would require volumes of space.

I have merely chosen seven men — all heroes of the frontier — and have sought to weave about their lives in a somewhat coherent manner some

Digitized by Google

of the conspicuous facts of the struggle in which the Southwest was won for the Union.

While these men were thoroughly human and not free from faults, they were empire builders. They were men who dared. They did things that ordinary men could not have done. And today, after a long lapse of years, American blood is redder and American patriotism is brighter for what they did.

The plan of attempting to sustain a rather broad discussion of historical facts entirely by biographical methods may be unconventional, but I hope it will at least prove readable.

THE AUTHOR.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

I	KIT CARSON, FAMOUS SCOUT	13
II	ROBERT F. STOCKTON	39
III	"UNCLE DICK" WOOTTON	71
IV	SAM HOUSTON	104
V	STEPHEN W. KEARNY	145
VI	GEORGE A. CUSTER	174
VII	JOHN C. FRÉMONT	199

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ILLUSTRATIONS

KIT CARSON . . . . . *Frontispiece*

ROBERT F. STOCKTON 38

"UNCLE DICK" WOOTTON 70

SAM HOUSTON 104

STEPHEN W. KEARNY 144

GEORGE A. CUSTER 174

JOHN C. FRÉMONT 198

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

WINNING THE SOUTHWEST

I

KIT CARSON, FAMOUS SCOUT

KIT CARSON stands with the foremost of that little group of brave-hearted men who pushed back the frontier and helped win the great West — in this instance the Southwest — for civilization and the Union. Few names appeal so vividly to the American imagination, few can so easily conjure to the mind deeds of heroic daring and thrilling adventure.

Throughout the country the name of Kit Carson is today a household word. Carson has stood the crucial test of fame; his career is replete with a high sense of personal honor, and his deeds never have been evilly spoken of. Cities in three States, a lake, a river and many cañons and creeks bear the name of this distinguished scout and Indian fighter. Carson was, in many respects, one of the most remarkable characters this country ever has produced. He was also one of the

Digitized by Google

most representative types of the famed West, that region which always has been, and will continue to be, "the most American part of America." The average person doubtless thinks of this man as did an acquaintance of his, who, writing in 1853, spoke as follows: "I had frequently listened to the wild tales of daring which he had performed. . . . The Kit Carson of my imagination was over six feet high and a sort of modern Hercules in his build, with an enormous beard and a voice like a roused lion, whose talk was all of 'stirring incidents by flood and field.' The *real* Kit Carson I found to be a plain, simple, unostentatious man, rather below the medium height, with brown, curling hair, little or no beard, and a voice as soft and gentle as a woman's. In fact, the hero of a hundred desperate encounters, whose life had been spent mostly amid wildernesses where the white man was almost unknown, was one of Dame Nature's gentlemen — a sort of article which she gets up occasionally, but nowhere in better shape than among the backwoods of America."

Yet this same undersized, mild-mannered little man had a frame like wire, nerves of steel, unflinching will power and resourcefulness unsur-

Digitized by Google

passed. A fight with Indians or Mexicans seems to have inspired him with double strength. As described by an old plainsman, he "was a devil incarnate in an Indian fight, who raised more hair from heads of Redskins than any two other men in the western country." It is known further that men of giant size, fierce bullies of the mountains but of unquestioned courage, soon learned to fear this little man and avoid meeting him in conflict. But his honor commanded their respect, for his word never was broken.

A maker of military reputations was Kit Carson. Skilled commanders of high rank confided in him and intrusted the success of their achievements to his genius of leadership. And Carson always made good. He won the confidence of the Federal Government, and was one of the builders of New Mexico. Yet he was, to the end of his life, simple and unaffected, faithful to duty, loyal to his friends, and never given to boasting or loud talk. He was as great in character as in genius.

Christopher Carson (always called "Kit") was born of poor parents in Madison County, Kentucky, on December 24, 1809. While only a babe his parents, with the true western spirit,

Digitized by Google

emigrated to Missouri, settling in what is now Howard County, near the center of that state. Concerning young Carson's early boyhood but little is known. He never received much schooling, and it seems that his father apprenticed him to a harnessmaker. Kit does not appear to have liked the leather worker's trade; to borrow the words of another writer, he soon "fell off the bench." Possessed of a restless, roving disposition, he seems to have felt the call of the West in his blood, and in 1826, at the age of seventeen, he listened to that call and ran away from home to join a party of Santa Fé traders — his first journey across the plains.

It was on this trip that Carson gave his first exhibition of real nerve. Following the old trail the caravan had about reached the present site of Great Bend, on the Arkansas River, when one of the teamsters, in carelessly pulling a gun from a wagon, accidentally shot himself. The bones of his arm were badly shattered by the bullet and the man nearly died from loss of blood, but he kept on with the party. After a few days gangrene set in and it was seen that only an amputation could save the poor fellow's life. As there were no surgical instruments to be had, none of

Digitized by Google

the older men would attempt the task. The suffering man had given up all hope, when Kit Carson stepped forward, saying that, since no other person would attempt the operation, he would do it, in spite of his inexperience. All the tools he had were a razor, saw, and a large iron wagon bolt. Quickly cutting the flesh with the razor, Carson sawed through the bone, and, having heated the bolt to white heat, he seared the wound to prevent further blood flowing. Crude as it may have been, the operation was a thorough success, and the patient is said to have quickly recovered and to have lived afterward for many years.

Reaching Santa Fé in November, 1826, Carson spent the ensuing winter with an old mountaineer called Kincade, who seems to have taught him a vast amount of practical knowledge concerning frontier life. The following spring young Carson became homesick and started back East over the trail, without a cent of money. He had traveled nearly five hundred miles when he met a party of traders westbound. Again the old longing for the far West came over him, and he hired out to this party as a teamster and returned with them to Santa Fé. He next drove a wagon

Digitized by Google

to El Paso. Returning soon to Santa Fé, he journeyed to Taos, in Northern New Mexico. He then seems to have hired out as cook to a man named Ewing Young, which job he held until the Spring of 1828.

Once more he decided to go back to his old home in Missouri, and he had journeyed a long way over the usual route when he met another westbound party. Again he could not resist that longing for the West, and he once more returned with the traders to Santa Fé. In the meantime, having acquired some Spanish, he hired to a Colonel Tramell as interpreter and went with a wagon train to Chihuahua, Old Mexico. But this life did not suit him, and, returning northward, he worked for a time as teamster in the Gila River copper mines. However, he was soon back in Taos, which became his acknowledged home for the remainder of his life. The next five years were spent mainly in the trapping business.

In the spring of 1829 Carson joined a company of trappers under the leadership of the aforementioned Ewing Young, and this little band pushed westward through the Rockies to the neighborhood of San Francisco Bay, and from

Digitized by Google

thence through the San Joaquin Valley southward, trapping as they went. Selling their furs at San Rafael, they invested the proceeds in a herd of horses, with which they started eastward. Arriving at Santa Fé in April, 1830, the trappers sold the furs secured on their homeward journey for $24,000, which was divided among the eighteen men. But scarcely did they realize that they had been among the very first white men to cross the continental divide and reach the Pacific Ocean.

So the seasons went by. The trapping business was then at its height, and liberal profits awaited those who dared brave the mountain wilds for furs. Surrounded by the grandeur of nature, continually menaced by cunning savages, often facing the horrors of starvation, yet living a life of utter freedom — these were environments well calculated to draw out the best of any man's qualifications. It was this kind of environment that developed a type of men who, for astute knowledge of the wilderness and for intrepid courage, never have been equaled. Perhaps it is not surprising to observe that Kit Carson soon became preëminent in this class. From the plains of New Mexico to the headwaters of the Colum-

Digitized by Google

bia he learned the country — every mountain pass, every stretch of prairie, and every rocky landmark — like a book. Here he acquired that knowledge of the West which was to render his services indispensable to great exploring and military campaigns of later years. Before reaching the age of twenty-five Carson had established a brilliant reputation as a rifle shot, hunter, trapper, infallible guide, and leader. His knowledge of the wilds, of pathfinding, subsistence in the open, of wild beasts, and of Indians has never been surpassed, if equaled.

In the autumn of the year 1830 Carson joined the party of a fur trader named Fitzgerald, and another long journey into the heart of the Rockies was made. In a skirmish with the Blackfeet Indians he was shot by a rifle ball in the shoulder, which is said to have been the only injury he ever received in battle. But even this mode of life had too little excitement for Kit Carson. Having returned to Santa Fé in safety, he decided the following year to avoid traveling with a large hunting party, as was the usual custom. This time he chose but two companions, and this little group of three men pushed into the mountains to the heart of the Rockies, and, after an absence of

Digitized by Google

about eight months, they returned safely with a large quantity of furs.

Not long after this expedition he led an exploring party of fifty men and traversed the entire Northwest, discovering the headwaters of some of the largest streams in that region.

It was on one of these numerous trips that Kit Carson gave another remarkable demonstration of his cool nerve and daring. He was in summer camp in a sort of rendezvous in the mountains — a place where Indians and hunters and trappers of all nationalities came together to market their goods and obtain supplies from the agents of the fur companies. As might be expected, much brawling and violence took place in this mixture of men — Spaniards, Canadians, Indians, Frenchmen, Germans, and Americans. Conspicuous in the crowd was a giant Frenchman, a hunter named Shunan, who seems to have been an all-round "bad" man. He had been nicknamed the "big bully of the mountains." Mounting his horse he started out to look for trouble and defied any man in the camp to "come on." He seemed to have a special grudge against Americans, and finally declared that they were fit only to be whipped with switches. At these

Digitized by Google

words a little man, about five feet six inches tall, with piercing gray eyes and sandy hair, stepped forth, saying, "I am an American, the most worthless one among them, but, if you want to die, I will accept your challenge."

It was now to be a test of honor according to the unwritten laws of the West, where the coolest head, the best nerve, and the quickest hand win — a desperate game, in which the stakes are life and death.

Grasping a revolver, Carson mounted his horse, which stood near by. Shunan, likewise mounted, was awaiting him. Both riders rushed toward each other at full gallop. Their horses almost touched when Shunan fired with a rifle, the ball grazing his opponent's cheek and clipping a lock of hair. Almost instantly a well-aimed bullet from Carson's revolver entered the Frenchman's hand, came out at the wrist, and passed through the arm above the elbow, completely disabling him. Humbled and helpless, Shunan now begged for his life, which Carson generously granted him, and it is a well established fact that this "big bully of the mountains" never insulted Americans again.

Carson's active career as a trapper seems to

Digitized by Google

have ended about 1834. By that year the beaver, the most valuable of the common fur bearing animals, was becoming scarce. Long and dangerous trips in the mountains could no longer guarantee good profits. Yet it had to be a wild life in the open, and accordingly Carson became hunter for Bent's Fort. Here for eight years he kept forty men supplied with game. In what is now Eastern Colorado he must have loved the vast solitude of the unbroken plains, then thronging with countless herds of buffalo and elk. And the ever alluring, mysterious Rockies were always near to beckon him when his fancy chose a wild flight into the wilderness. Because of his expertness with firearms and his rare skill as a hunter, Carson during this period earned the nickname of "Nestor [probably intended by the frontiersmen to mean Nimrod] of the Rocky Mountains."

Carson in 1842 ceased to be a professional hunter. That was an important year of his life. Some years before he had married a beautiful Indian girl, whom he tenderly loved. She died soon after giving birth to a daughter. While but little is known of the child, Carson is said to have sent her to St. Louis, where she might be properly brought up and educated. Later she is re-

Digitized by Google

ported to have married and moved to California, so she drops out of the story. Be all this as it may, in the summer of '42 Carson again had a longing to go back to Missouri, and this time he did return, only to find that his parents were dead, the old home in decay, and his former friends all gone. Feeling lonely, he took passage on the Missouri River for St. Louis, presumably to visit his child. He soon grew tired of the city life, for his old love of the wilderness could not be suppressed. Returning on an up-river steamboat, he is said to have met John C. Frémont, then starting out on his first exploring expedition. This acquaintance developed into a close friendship, with the result that in the following year Carson consented to accompany Frémont as guide on his second trip of exploration, though at the outset he appears to have ranked second to a Basil Lajeunesse, a scout greatly beloved by the great explorer. At any rate, beginning with 1842 the life of Kit Carson becomes closely associated with that of John C. Frémont, and the balance of his career is identified with conspicuous public service, achievements which are the heritage of the present.

Throughout his life Carson seems never to

Digitized by Google

have engaged himself permanently with any one man or with any single enterprise. He was continually sought by various independent traders, explorers, military commanders, or the Federal Government as a sort of trustworthy companion, personal friend, and diplomatic scout. In all the capacities which he served, in each of which his responsibility was of the gravest kind, he never violated confidence. His inexhaustible knowledge of the West was never gainsaid. Frémont himself wrote the following estimate of him: "With me Carson and truth mean the same thing. He is always the same — gallant and disinterested. He is kind-hearted and averse to all quarrelsome and turbulent scenes, and he has never been engaged in any mere personal broils or encounters except on one occasion,* which he sometimes modestly relates to his friends."

In 1843 Carson married at Bent's Fort a very respectable New Mexican woman much younger than himself. On July 14 of the same year he joined Frémont's second expedition, as prearranged, near the headwaters of the Arkansas River. This account will not enter upon the Frémont explorations in detail, nor will it be seriously

* Probably his episode with Shunan.

Digitized by Google

concerned with Carson's work in the Northwest. It is sufficient merely to state that he accompanied Frémont throughout his second trip, going into the Oregon and Northern California country and returning by way of Sutter's Fort and the southern route to Santa Fé. After a year's absence he reached Bent's Fort in the summer of 1844, having journeyed four thousand miles.

Carson then determined to settle on a ranch in Northern New Mexico, about fifty miles east of Taos, but his home life was soon to be again interrupted by thrilling adventures.

In the autumn of 1845, at Frémont's urgent request, Carson conducted the former's third and most famous expedition once more into Oregon and California. It was on this trip that the party suffered from some sharp encounters with the Klamath Indians, in one of which the well-known Lajeunesse was killed. On another occasion, while in this region, Frémont, by riding his horse over an Indian, saved Carson's life. The latter's gun had missed fire just as a savage was aiming an arrow at him from close range. Meanwhile the Mexican War had broken out. Pushing south with Frémont's command, Carson shared with high distinction in the romantic con-

Digitized by Google

quest of California, the important details of which are told in the stories of Kearny, Stockton, and Frémont.

In the summer of 1846, following the exciting events incident to the preliminary California conquest, Carson was sent East as a special Government messenger, bearing dispatches from Commodore Stockton to the Federal authorities in Washington. Starting late in the summer of 1846, with a party of fifteen men, he had proceeded safely to a point near Socorro, New Mexico, when he met Kearny's command westward bound.

Kearny at once assumed responsibility for the delivery of Carson's messages, and ordered the latter to return to California with him. Acting as guide, Carson led the soldiers safely through, although much suffering was endured while crossing the desert. Reaching Rancho Santa Maria, about sixty miles from San Diego, on December 5, where they were joined by Captain Gillespie and Lieutenant Beale, with thirty-five men, the combined forces on the following day fought the memorable and bloody battle of San Pascual, in which Carson bravely participated. The details of this campaign belong properly to

Digitized by Google

the story of Kearny, where they are narrated in detail.

Following the fight at San Pascual and the ineffective skirmish at San Bernardo, Kearny's command found themselves besieged by a superbly well mounted force of Mexican cavalry, and in a half famished condition. Unless relief could be secured from San Diego, several hours' journey distant, there was but slight hope of escaping. Anticipating just such a situation, Kearny had sent a small party to secure help, but they all were captured. Matters looked desperate. On the night of December 8 he sent out Kit Carson, accompanied by Lieutenant Beale and a friendly Indian. Alone at night this little band endured horrible sufferings. They had to guard against capture by a vigilant foe. They suffered from hunger and thirst, and their feet were pitifully lacerated by cactus needles. But Carson always "made good." They reached San Diego successfully, though it happened that a relief party had chanced to start out on the evening before they arrived. Beale did not recover his health for several months as a result of the ordeal.

In March, 1847, Carson again was sent with

Digitized by Google

dispatches to Washington. On this journey he was obliged to fight his way through Indians on and near the Gila, but, undaunted, he pushed ahead, following the Old Santa Fé Trail to the Missouri River, and reached Washington in June, having traveled about four thousand miles on horseback within a space of three months.

Carson's heroic services in the winning of the Southwest had by this time gained wide recognition, and President Polk appointed him a second lieutenant in the United States Rifle Corps. This appointment was never ratified by the Senate, though it was a long time before Carson became aware of that fact. Having reached Washington, he soon was ordered back to California, again with Government dispatches. Arriving at the Point of Rocks, on the Santa Fé Trail — a famous landmark about six hundred and fifty miles beyond Independence — he had a desperate battle with the Comanche Indians. It seems that he had found there encamped a band of volunteers en route for the Mexican War. The Indians, true to their custom, made an early morning raid, and succeeded in driving off the soldiers' live stock. The men, headed by Carson, made a counter attack upon the Indians, killed a num-

Digitized by Google

ber of them, and managed to recover the cattle, but the surviving red men escaped with the horses. Pushing on with a party of fifteen men, Carson again was attacked by Indians, three hundred in number, in the vicinity of the Virgin River, but the white men successfully stood their ground. He reached Monterey without serious mishap, and, in the absence of anything more exciting, served for a time against the border Mexicans in California.

In the spring of 1848, someone again was needed to carry dispatches from California to Washington. Carson, of course, was chosen. While on his way eastward this time he managed to spend a day with his family at Taos. His homecomings to this place had thus far been about three years apart. Pushing on at once, he again made a safe trip to Washington and honorably fulfilled his duties. Returning to New Mexico, he decided to settle down once more in the ranch business, with Lucien B. Maxwell, a wealthy and daring speculator, as partner.

Scarcely had Carson begun to enjoy a well-earned rest than the Apache Indians made a savage raid into New Mexico, killing men, women, children, stealing live stock, and destroying

Digitized by Google

all the property to be found. Near the city of Santa Fé they attacked a family named White, killing the father and eldest son and carrying away the mother and young children into captivity. Naturally, this crime provoked great anger throughout that country, and plans for a swift vengeance were at once set in motion.

The Indians were known to be hiding in the vicinity of Las Vegas, and thither Kit Carson was at once summoned to assist in the expedition. Arriving a little late, Carson found that the citizens had given first command to another man. Yet he was not offended by this, and willingly joined the party. Marching night and day, they soon approached the Indian camp, up in the mountains and well fortified. Without waiting for any preliminaries, Carson at once let out a yell and dashed in among the Indians, thinking, of course, that his comrades would follow him. But he had misjudged the courage of his New Mexican friends — they simply stood gazing at Carson with open-mouthed astonishment, not daring to go with him. Suddenly realizing that he had no support, he managed to save his life only by wheeling about and galloping back to his men. In doing so he had the rare presence of

Digitized by Google

mind to throw himself forward upon his horse's neck to avoid being shot. Of course he escaped — with only a bullet in his coat — but his steed received six arrows. It is well understood that Carson used some strong language on his party for their unwarranted timidity, but they accepted his rebuke in good faith, realizing the sacredness of their mission. They finally did make an effective charge, routing the Indians, but the savages had murdered their poor white victims. Had the Mexicans possessed half of Carson's dash and bravery a successful rescue might have been made.

Resuming his business activity in 1850, Carson and Maxwell made a successful horse dealing trip from New Mexico to Fort Laramie. The following year Carson went to St. Louis, purchased a large stock of merchandise, and started westward.

Reaching a village of Cheyennes on the upper Arkansas River, he learned that the Indians had been deeply offended against the whites because an army officer had rashly whipped one of their chiefs. It happened that Carson was the first white man to approach since the offense had been given. Had it been years before, when he

Digitized by Google

was the hunter at Bent's Fort and familiar with all the neighboring tribes, he would have had no trouble. He was now little more than a stranger to them; his local reputation had faded during his long absence. But he advanced alone among them and boldly entered their council. Thinking, of course, that he could not understand them, they talked without restraint in his presence. Carson knew the Cheyenne language perfectly, and, after he had heard them declare their intention of capturing his wagon train and killing him, he calmly arose and made them a speech in their own tongue. He told them who he was and recalled to their minds many past kindnesses he had shown them. He expressed his desire to render them any further kindness, but concluded by saying that, if they proposed to take his scalp, he might have a hand in the affair. When he finished speaking the Indians quietly left the council, while Carson rejoined his men.

His next unusual exploit was to select a few trusty companions and drive a flock of six thousand five hundred sheep overland from New Mexico to Southern California, about eight hundred miles. Strange as it may seem, this proved to be a highly profitable speculation. According

Digitized by Google

to good authority Carson realized about $5.50 per head for his entire herd.

In narrating the authentic experiences of this extraordinary man a large volume might easily be filled. This story can only attempt to set forth some of the striking episodes of his life, at the same time noting those events of his career which were of the greatest importance to the Southwest.

In passing, then, it is fitting to observe that the Government, in further recognition of his great services, appointed him Indian agent of New Mexico in 1854. He was made a friendly adviser and guide to those tribes whose arch enemy and conqueror he previously had been.

In Indian affairs Carson revealed genuine statesmanship, and his ideas in this department of the Federal Government have been of lasting good. He was one of the first men successfully to advocate the practical scheme of rounding up Indians and teaching them to subsist from the soil. It is a well-known fact that he became a firm friend of the warlike Apaches, Cheyennes, Kiowas, Utes, and Arapahoes, yet in his official capacity he was at times forced to fight them because of their occasional raids upon civilization.

Digitized by Google

From 1849 to 1865 the Government spent $30,000,000 in subduing the various wild tribes of Arizona and New Mexico, and Carson was prominently identified with this entire enterprise. Not only, as an Indian fighter and scout, did he help win the Southwest, but in the War of the Rebellion he helped retain that region for the Union.

Commanding the First Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers, Carson, with the rank of colonel, rendered great assistance to the Federal cause in the battle of Valverde, in February, 1862. After this battle he led his volunteers to Fort Stanton and waged a successful campaign against the Navajos and Apaches, who had revolted during the absence of the regular troops. In the summer of 1863 he again marched out and subdued the Navajos in their wild mountain retreats, concluding his campaign by placing them on their reservation at Bosque Redondo. During the war he was brevetted a brigadier-general. Finally, in the spring of 1865, Carson, with three companies of soldiers, was ordered to march out and stop the ravages which the Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes were inflicting along the Santa Fé Trail.

He first attacked a large Kiowa village near

Digitized by Google

the Cimarron. The battle was hard fought, lasting all day, but the Indians were finally driven out with a loss of sixty, and their village of one one hundred and fifty lodges was captured. Carson's men sustained sixteen casualties, but they destroyed the entire town.

It is true the Indians respected Kit Carson, liked him for his fair dealings with them, and called him "father," yet it might easily be reasoned that their respect for him was inspired through fear of his unerring aim and terrific fighting ability.

About the year 1860, while in the mountains one day, Carson was thrown by his horse, receiving internal injuries from which he never fully recovered. Otherwise in perfect health, he is afterward said to have remarked, "Were it not for this injury I would live to be a hundred years of age."

From the date of this mortal accident he knew his life was in danger, yet he lived on and achieved splendid deeds that today embellish the history of New Mexico and reflect to the honor of the nation.

Death never had terrors for him. He faced

Digitized by Google

the decline of life with that same calm and simple courage which characterized his entire career. Surrounded by a wide circle of near friends, who in their affectionate regard loved to call him "General," he enjoyed that serene contentment which comes only to those who can face old age fully conscious of having performed life's duties well.

In the early spring of 1868 he accompanied a number of Ute chiefs to Washington, and from thence he went on to Boston to consult some specialists. His case was diagnosed as an aneurism of the aorta, besides a serious bronchial affection. It was to be but a matter of time with him. In April Mrs. Carson died, leaving seven children, and this sad event depressed him greatly.

The end came on May 23, 1868. While visiting a son at Fort Lyons, Colorado, General Carson attempted to mount a horse, which resulted in a fatal hemorrhage, a ruptured artery in the neck. Though given prompt surgical attendance, there was no hope; his life quietly slipped away. A brief struggle, three gasping words, "Doctor, compadre, adios," and his brave soul had fled.

Digitized by Google

The remains rested for some time at Fort Lyons, after which they were taken to Taos for interment.

In the plaza of old Santa Fé, Carson's name is fittingly inscribed on a cenotaph raised in commemoration of the illustrious men who fought for New Mexico. And in the city of Trinidad, Colorado, a beautiful little park of seven acres, near the center of the town, recently was dedicated to his memory. It was the gift of the Hon. D. L. Taylor, mayor of the town and an old friend and hearty admirer of the great frontiersman. A movement is at present on foot in the city to erect a suitable monument.

But the fame of Kit Carson, sincere, of unwavering honesty, always loyal to his friends and country, and of unaffected courage, rests secure, not merely in stone or wood, but in the hearts of the American people.

Digitized by Google

Robert F. Stockton

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

II

ROBERT F. STOCKTON

ROBERT F. STOCKTON won honors for the American navy in the conquest of California. It was Stockton who, supported by Frémont, and later by Kearny, drove the Mexican troops out of the State or forced them into submission. It was under the leadership of Stockton that Los Angeles, the capital, twice was taken. It was Stockton who first proclaimed American rule in California.

James K. Polk, who became President in 1845, was no ordinary statesman. He knew exactly what he wanted and how to get it. He wanted territory — the entire Southwest — all that lay between the Gulf and the Pacific.

North of our present Mexican boundary, Texas, under the leadership of Sam Houston, had been annexed under President Tyler by a joint resolution of Congress on March 1, 1845, only three days before Polk came into office. The acquisition of New Mexico — which then included Arizona — seemed a logical undertaking,

Digitized by Google

while to secure California, the jewel of the Far West, was Polk's consuming ambition. The territory lying to the eastward — the present states of Nevada, Utah, and a portion of Colorado — would come in as an incidental feature of the conquest. To win this region, over a half million square miles in extent, was no easy project. It required some kind of war which could be settled by a satisfactory "boundary adjustment."

Old Mexico, after a sufficient amount of prodding, finally condescended to start a war — in which she was, of course, badly whipped. This fracas cost the United States about $100,000,000 and 13,000 men, but Polk got what he wanted. The Mexican War was undoubtedly an arbitrary and high-handed act of aggression. When judged solely by the merits of the case, it is exceedingly hard to justify. Yet in the light of future events, when the temperament of the American and Mexican nations is once considered, a conflict must have been inevitable. The harsh, but exceedingly practical, policy of some statesmen has been: "The end justifies the means." With due respect for our Mexican friends, a comparative observation of the wonderful development which

Digitized by Google

our Southwest has undergone during the last sixty years will justify the average American in believing that, right or wrong, perhaps after all Polk was right.

For many years before the war the possession of California had been desired. Senator T. H. Benton, of Missouri, and Congressman John Floyd, of Virginia, while struggling successfully to secure Oregon from Great Britain, had also called forcible attention to the great desirability of California. Interest had been further intensified by the stories of trappers and traders who were continually returning to the States with glowing reports of California's beauty, rare climate, and natural wealth.

In 1822 immigration slowly but surely set in for this region, following the opening of an ocean trade between the cities of Boston and Monterey. In 1830 Mexico passed a law which aimed to prevent American immigration into Texas and to stop any further colonization of her border. Yet this law had no serious effect upon Texas and New Mexican immigrants, for they kept right on coming. In California the act was scarcely felt, for the local Mexican officials there were continually jealous of their home government.

Digitized by Google

Because of their isolation from the Mexican capital they assumed considerable liberty in their conduct. Consequently, law or no law, they welcomed immigrants, as a means, no doubt, of increasing their revenues.

But it was a long journey to California, and American settlements grew slowly there until the discovery of gold in 1848. When conquered in 1846, California had only four hundred Americans out of a total population of about nine thousand. Most of these Americans were located at Monterey, then the leading trade center, and upon ranches in the Sacramento River Valley, usually not far from Sutter's Fort.

The Californian Government, like that of many other Mexican States, was flimsy, due mainly to the plots of General José Castro, commander of the army, in his efforts to weaken the authority of Governor Pio Pico. Revolts were brewing continually, yet the foreigners and native Mexicans managed to live peaceably together. Left undisturbed, this region, like Texas, might in time have been forcibly absorbed by American settlers. However, a final occupation by so slow a process as colonization was not to be. A warlike administration at Washington, headed by an

Digitized by Google

imperious, masterful President, deemed the immediate possession of California an absolute necessity. Through the services of such men as Stockton, Kearny, Frémont, Carson, and others of a similar type, Polk's ambition, a dream of empire, was fulfilled.

Historians probably will never cease to wrangle as to the real motives of the Federal Government in going to war with Mexico and taking this vast area. It seems a clearly established fact that many Southern statesmen, including the President, who was from Tennessee, wanted definitely to increase slave territory and pro-slavery political power by carving new states from the Southwest. Some writers take a broad view of the situation and observe that Mexico had been habitually exasperating in her treatment of American citizens, that she was aching for a fight, started trouble, and received her just deserts. They allege further that, had we not taken California, Texas, and the present Southwest country from a weaker neighbor, some European power, either France or England, would certainly have stepped in and gained a foothold at our very doors. Without doubt Mr. Polk was sincere in his belief that the interests

Digitized by Google

of the nation were at stake, and that if we did not take California a foreign fleet might seize her, and she would thus be in more unworthy hands than ours.

Be all this as it may, we did take California and all the country in question, just as Polk intended, and this region is now an inseparable part of the Union. The main purpose of this story is to deal with facts as they are, and not as to what might have been. Nor do all these discussions of "ifs" and "whys" detract one iota from the record of those men who, by virtue of their courage and devotion to duty, were the real winners of the Southwest.

In accordance with the early plans of the Mexican War, Commodore Sloat had been ordered to occupy the seaports of California at the first news of hostilities occurring, while General Kearny, with his now famed Army of the West, was to march overland and coöperate with him. On May 17, 1846, Sloat learned that war between the United States and Mexico had begun. But he was now an old man, cautious and irresolute. Not until July 2 did he venture into the harbor of Monterey, the most important port, and he was followed by a British squadron under

Digitized by Google

command of an Admiral Seymour. At Monterey, Sloat learned that John C. Frémont and his daring band had already started warlike operations in the well-known "Bear Flag Revolt." He, of course, supposed that the latter was acting in pursuance of Federal instructions, and so, after much hesitation, he raised the stars and stripes over Monterey.

But conquering a country according to blanket instructions, thousands of miles from the home Government, was too adventurous a task for a man of Sloat's advanced age, though it just suited such dashing leaders as Frémont or Kearny. Hearty coöperation between the land and naval forces, while imperative, could not be secured while Sloat directed the American fleet. The situation soon solved itself with the arrival from Honolulu of Commodore Stockton in the frigate "Congress," he having sailed from Norfolk around Cape Horn in the previous October, bearing sealed instructions from Washington.

Robert F. Stockton needs no introduction to naval history. Born at Princeton, New Jersey, on August 20, 1795, the son of Senator Richard Stockton, he entered the navy as a midshipman on September 1, 1811. He first cruised with the

Digitized by Google

Atlantic Home Squadron under Commodore Rodgers on the flagship "President," where he earned the nickname "Fighting Bob." Later he served for a time as aid to the Secretary of the Navy, though he rejoined Rodgers' fleet and took an active part in the defense of Baltimore against the British. Because of his gallantry he was promoted to be a lieutenant in 1814. He served bravely during the war with the Barbary powers in 1815, after which he cruised for several years. In 1822 he founded a colony at Cape Mesurado, on the west coast of Africa, which, in 1847, became the present negro republic of Liberia. Subsequently he was sent to drive the pirates out of the West Indies, after which campaign he spent the years 1823 and 1824 in surveying the Southern coast. It was during the latter period that he was married to Maria Potter, of Charleston, South Carolina. From 1826 to 1838 he edited a New Jersey newspaper.

Reëntering the service, he served as executive officer of the flagship "Ohio" in the Mediterranean squadron, being promoted to the rank of post captain in 1839. In 1841 he declined the appointment of Secretary of the Navy under President Tyler.

Digitized by Google

Stockton was one of the first commanders to apply steam power to warships, and in the steam sloop of war "Princeton" he carried the annexation resolutions from Washington to the Texas Government. In October, 1845, he was made commander-in-chief of the Pacific squadron, going, as previously mentioned, around South America to the Sandwich Islands and from thence to Monterey, which place Commodore Sloat had occupied only a few days before his arrival.

Stockton thus reached California in the prime of life. He was a man of Frémont's pattern—bold, not afraid of assuming responsibility, in full sympathy with any daring enterprise, such as the "Bear Flag Revolt," and ready to fight Mexico herself if necessary.

Sloat retired and appointed Stockton commander-in-chief of all the American forces in California. Stockton at once sought Frémont, had a friendly understanding, and received from him a battalion of one hundred and sixty volunteers. In return, he appointed Frémont a major and Gillespie, one of the latter's men, a captain, to serve under his authority as long as considered necessary.

Digitized by Google

About July 26, Stockton sent his battalion down the coast on board the warship "Cyane" to San Diego, where he knew they might soon be wanted. On the 20th, Commodore Sloat transferred his flag to the "Levant" and sailed for home, leaving an exciting campaign open to his successor, who took immediate and full command.

On the day of Sloat's departure, Stockton issued a proclamation to the people of California, in which address, among other things, he declared that the Mexican Government and its military leaders had, without cause, for a year been threatening the United States with hostilities; that, in pursuance of these threats, they had, with seven thousand men, attacked a detachment of two thousand United States troops, by whom they were routed. General Castro, the Mexican commander-in-chief of the military forces in California, had* "shamefully violated international law and national hospitality by hunting and following, with wicked intent, Captain Frémont, of the United States army, and his band of forty men, who had entered California for

* Bancroft.

Digitized by Google

rest and refreshment after a dangerous scientific expedition over the mountains." Stockton asserted further that, until redress could be gained from Mexico, military occupation of Santa Fé and Monterey had been determined upon. Yet the native officials, instead of remaining under American protection to perform their duties, had fled, leaving the people in a state of anarchy and confusion. Since the local officials had left, Stockton felt it his duty to all concerned, and California in particular, to end the lawless depredations of Castro's men against peaceful inhabitants. As he could not accomplish this mission by remaining in any of the seaports, he would immediately march against "these boasting and abusive chiefs, who, unless driven out, will, with the aid of hostile Indians, keep this beautiful country in a constant state of revolution and blood." He declared further that the general of the California forces was a "usurper, who had been guilty of great offenses, who had impoverished the country, who had deserted his post when worst needed, who had come into power by force, and who must be expelled by force"; in fact, Mexico seemed compelled from time to

Digitized by Google

time to abandon California to "the mercies of any wicked man who could muster one hundred men in arms."

In fairness to truth, however, it must be said that this proclamation was badly overdrawn, inaccurate in its presentation of Castro's attitude toward Frémont, and decidedly vague as to the real meaning it conveyed, which was simply a determination to occupy and hold California. Although bombastic, the document was fully in accord with the Mexican way of doing things, yet, as further events proved, Stockton's methods of warfare were not those of Mexico. In this official act Stockton may have been influenced by Frémont. Both of these men were ambitious, and, as they were acting at a long distance from home, with all honor for what they did, perhaps it was natural for them to picture their opposition as great as possible — to do a little "grandstand" work — in order to win a full measure of success when success was achieved.

Now to trace briefly the fortunes of the California Mexicans after the American invasion.

Immediately after Sloat's arrival General Castro had fled southward from Santa Clara with about two hundred men, accompanied by

Digitized by Google

Juan B. Alvarado, a distinguished citizen but who held no military command. Halting at Los Ojitos, Castro sent word to General Pico at San Luis Obispo informing the latter of Sloat's invasion. For a time these quarreling leaders seem to have laid aside their differences and to have decided to defend Los Angeles, the capital, against the Americans.

On July 24, having assembled his legislators at Los Angeles, Pico aroused considerable patriotism by his oratory, as well as by the speeches of certain other speakers whom he had chosen for the occasion. Castro and his small army soon arrived, and measures for resistance were at once taken. Yet all plans of defense were entered upon in a decidedly listless manner, and coöperation, if any, on the part of subordinate officials, was lukewarm. Many people were in unquestioned sympathy with the invaders, while others held aloof from what seemed to be a useless struggle. Many had no faith in their leaders. While Pico and Castro made a show of friendship, their subordinates were in a continual quarrel. Indeed, while Pico was away the people of Los Angeles had organized to fight Castro. Hence the men of Southern California were slow

Digitized by Google

to join the "regular" army. Appeals to citizens in the outlying districts for military duty were generally met by great "feelings" of patriotism —accompanied by regrets that the Indians were dangerous, and thus it was unsafe to leave home. The California Government had lost both credit and reputation. The ranch owners even hesitated to give firearms and horses for their country's cause.

In the meantime Frémont had landed at San Diego, while Stockton, with three hundred and sixty marines, had disembarked at San Pedro. Sailing out of Monterey on August 1, the latter had stopped en route at Santa Barbara, raised the American flag, and left a small garrison, arriving at San Pedro on the sixth. On August 7 two Mexican envoys from Los Angeles visited Stockton, bearing a note from Castro, in which the latter asked an explanation for the Americans' presence, and at the same time sought to negotiate. To this Stockton would not assent.

Finding that there was no chance to parley, Castro and his officers held a council of war at a nearby mesa on August 9. Here he decided that he had done all in his power to oppose the Americans, and he regretfully admitted that he

Digitized by Google

could not succeed in his purpose. He thought it best for him to leave the country at once to report the California situation to his supreme government. Furthermore, he respectfully invited Governor Pico to accompany him as a traveling companion as far as Sonora. Both leaders wrote affecting farewells to their people, extracts from both of which are herewith presented. On August 9 Castro delivered the following:

With my heart full of the most cruel grief, I take leave of you. I leave the country of my birth, but with the hope of returning to destroy the slavery in which I leave you. For the day will come when our unfortunate fatherland can punish this usurpation, as rapacious as unjust, and in the face of the world exact satisfaction for its grievances.

On the following day Pico wrote this address:

My friends, farewell! I take leave of you. I abandon the country of my birth, my family, my property, and whatever else is most grateful to man, all to save honor. But I go with the sweet satisfaction that you will not second the deceitful views of the astute enemy; that your loyalty and firmness will prove an inexpugnable barrier to the machinations of the invader. In any event, guard your honor and observe that the eyes of the entire universe are upon you.

Digitized by Google

On the night of August 10, Pico and Castro abandoned their country to its fate and left Los Angeles for Mexico. Having addressed their farewells, flight seemed their best means of safety. In spite of their loud expressions of grief and regret, it was their own misconduct and avarice which had destroyed confidence in themselves and made the occupation of California by a small American force easily possible.

In the meantime Stockton had been drilling his three hundred and sixty marines, and on August 11 he started for Los Angeles. On the afternoon of that day he learned of Castro and Pico's retreat, whereupon he sent one hundred and fifty of his men back to San Pedro. His progress was slow, as he had only oxen or the men themselves to draw the artillery. Reaching Castro's camp, he found ten abandoned cannon, four of which had been spiked. After a march of two days Stockton's men drew near the city, where they were joined by Frémont and his party, who had come up from San Diego. The combined forces then entered Los Angeles without opposition on August 13, 1846, and the American flag for the first time waved over the capital of California.

Digitized by Google

Thus far the conquest had certainly been an easy one. Conciliatory measures were at once adopted. The officials and captured native soldiers were paroled, while many of the citizens were not even required to comply with this formality. A number of foreign residents who desired peace are said to have effectively used their influence in advising submission to American arms.

Stockton's second proclamation appeared on August 17. It was merely an announcement that the country now belonged to the United States and as soon as possible it would be governed the same as all federal territories. Until a new government could be set up, military rule would, of course, prevail, yet the people could at once choose local civil officials if those already in office declined to serve. Like Kearny in New Mexico, Stockton promised thorough protection of life and property and complete religious toleration. Peace would be preserved by an armed force.

Although he signed himself "commander-in-chief and governor of the Territory of California," Stockton did but little toward organizing an effective government for the present. He

Digitized by Google

merely proclaimed himself governor and announced an election of alcaldes and petty officials to be held on September 15. Yet he devised many future plans, chief of which was the formation of a territorial government, with Frémont at its head, to conduct matters after he had left. He also developed the outline of a constitution, though he did not attempt to put it into effect. Stockton then decided to withdraw from military affairs and take up his work in the navy, his plan being to conduct war along the western coast of Mexico. Frémont was ordered to increase his battalion to three hundred men, to fortify and garrison the neighboring towns, and to meet him in San Francisco on October 25, where final arrangements would be made. On August 28, Stockton forwarded a full report of his proceedings to Washington by the overland route, in charge of Kit Carson. On the 31st he appointed Gillespie commandant of Southern California, with orders to preserve martial law and enforce the proclamation of August 17, and on September 2, 1846, he issued a general order appointing Frémont military commandant of the Territory, which was to be divided into three parts.

Digitized by Google

Stockton then sailed for San Francisco, stopping at Santa Barbara long enough to take on the garrison he had formerly left there and also Midshipman McRae, who had dispatches from Washington. Frémont and his men marched northward, leaving Gillespie and his tiny force in sole charge at Los Angeles. The conquest of California seemed complete. Stockton no doubt believed that the Mexicans would at once prove good citizens and that his schemes of government would automatically adjust themselves. But in this he was mistaken. The volatile temperament of the natives had yet to be taken into account.

Arriving in San Francisco early in October, Stockton was given a flattering reception, and in a speech delivered on the present site of Montgomery Street he gave an elaborate account of the capture of Los Angeles. His ambition ran high. He even planned to raise a force of one thousand men, sail down the coast, march inland, and assist General Taylor in the war with Mexico.

But things soon went wrong. A large war party of Walla Walla Indians created a big scare by invading from the north. They soon

Digitized by Google

were pacified, yet scarcely had this danger passed than a messenger named John Brown, nicknamed "Lean John," arrived from Los Angeles late in September with a report that all Southern California was in revolt and that Gillespie was in serious need of help. "Lean John" had made the trip over a route of about five hundred miles in just six days. Stockton at first thought the report greatly exaggerated, but he at once sent a warship with an advance detachment under Mervine to San Pedro, while he and Frémont followed a little later.

Captain Gillespie, it seems, had much to contend with, although his duty of maintaining peace and easy military restrictions had at first seemed easy to enforce. One thing led to another. A sham attack was made upon the garrison, and the latter retaliated with strict martial law. It was soon easy to believe that a war had started, and a native force of about three hundred was quickly organized, with many of Castro's former officers, recently paroled, in chief command. They justified breaking their paroles on the ground that Gillespie's unjust conduct toward them had renewed war, so releasing

Digitized by Google

them from all obligations toward their late conquerors.

The rebels established their main camp at Paredon Blancon, just outside the city. On September 24 they posted a proclamation which enumerated their grievances and appealed to Mexican patriotism to wreak vengeance upon their oppressors and any citizens who might not support the patriotic cause. The city was at once surrounded, and Gillespie's party was summoned to surrender.

The first skirmish took place at Chino Rancho, about twenty-five miles eastward, where Stockton had placed a small force of twenty foreigners under Benito Wilson. This little party was at once attacked, and, their ammunition giving out after a siege of two days, they surrendered as prisoners of war and were marched back to Los Angeles. The insurgents had scored a victory. Gillespie and his men meanwhile had but little food, and, after repeated demands to surrender, he was offered permission to march out unmolested to San Pedro if he would abandon the city. He accepted these terms and set out with the honors of war, reaching San Pedro in safety.

Digitized by Google

Santa Barbara and San Diego were likewise evacuated, and all Southern California was thus retaken by the natives, who now seemed to have everything their own way.

Meanwhile Captain Mervine, who had promptly sailed from San Francisco, arrived at San Pedro on October 6 with three hundred and fifty men, and, joining forces with Gillespie, the entire command started for Los Angeles on the following day. While they had no cannon nor horses, they did not think the Californians would put up much of a fight. Marching in solid ranks, they were attacked on the second day by a mounted band of Mexicans under Carrillo. The latter would simply wait until the Americans came within range, when they would fire their cannon and gallop ahead to reload it. This went on until six Americans were killed and several wounded, although no Mexicans were hurt.

Unable to catch the enemy, Mervine and Gillespie retreated to San Pedro, burying their dead on a little island, which is now called Isla da las Muertas. For several weeks their forces remained at San Pedro, closely watched by the enemy, who kept at a respectable distance. By October 31 the insurgent Government was fully

Digitized by Google

reorganized and in complete operation, and the American invasion seemed to have been a failure.

Commodore Stockton had left Monterey in the "Congress" on October 19, arriving at San Pedro four days later, where he learned what had transpired in his absence. The Mexicans under Carrillo were supposed to number at least eight hundred, but writers of the time declare that Carrillo would display his men on the hills in such manner that each man would be counted six or seven times. He is also said to have frequently ordered large numbers of riderless horses to be driven so as to raise great clouds of dust. According to so good an authority as Bancroft, Carrillo had but one hundred men, which makes it appear that the Americans were, for at least once, badly bluffed. Nevertheless, Stockton had become cautious, and he decided to attack the capital from San Diego, which would give him a more secure base. Early in November he accordingly sailed for San Diego with part of his men. It was here that Stockton learned of Kearny's approach from Santa Fé, and on December 3 he sent Captain Gillespie with a small squad to assist Kearny.

The Mexican commander, Flores, had sent out

Digitized by Google

two detachments, one under Andrés Pico and the other under Captain Cota, to watch the invaders' movements and to coöperate, if possible, in destroying any isolated band of Americans. The natives naturally were surprised to learn of a new invasion from the East, and it was with Pico's command that Kearny and Gillespie fought the ill-fated battle of San Pascual on December 6, 1846. As told in the story of Kearny, his fatigued, crippled, and half-famished command finally sought friendly shelter with Stockton in San Diego on December 12. The latter now assumed the rank of commander-in-chief, with Kearny in active command of the troops, and preparations for a final advance were at once begun.

On December 29, 1846, the combined American forces, six hundred strong, moved out of San Diego for Los Angeles. Out of the entire number only eighty-four were mounted. The men were poorly clothed, being obliged to wear shoes made by themselves from canvas, a poor protection against cactus needles. The weather was cold and the roads were heavy. The animals were thin, weak, and continually giving out.

Digitized by Google

Men often had to drag their ammunition and baggage wagons through deep wet sand and over steep grades. Yet, through the entire march of one hundred and forty-five miles the little army pushed on, as Stockton says, "with alacrity and cheerfulness." They left San Bernardo on January 1, 1847, and camped successively at Buena Vista, San Luis Rey, and Las Flores, without incident. Leaving the latter place they met three messengers with a note from Flores, in which a truce was suggested as a means of avoiding further bloodshed. To this Stockton would not listen, and he declared that if Flores were caught he would be shot as a traitor for breaking his parole.

Stockton camped on January 5 at Las Alisos, marched to Santa Ana on the sixth, and to Las Coyotes on the seventh. From there his course turned to the right toward the upper ford of the San Gabriel River, the Paso de Bartolo, where the enemy was found to be in possession of the opposite or northwest bank of the stream.

Flores had met with much discouragement. His original plan, no doubt, was to restrain the American invasion as much as possible by guer-

Digitized by Google

rilla tactics until help came from his mother country or until an international treaty could be made. But his support soon dwindled, as the patriotic spirit of the Californians faded through personal disputes, bad management, and hardships. No hope of success remained. The only fight stimulant which the Mexicans now had was a natural stubborn pride and the fear of being punished for their revolt. The native leaders thought that Frémont would arrive from the north and attack first, so they had held their forces in readiness for several days at San Fernando. Stockton, however, approached from the south sooner than they expected, which changed their plans, and they at once concealed their men in the willows and wild mustard at La Jaboneria, on the banks of the San Gabriel River, where they expected the invaders would pass. Stockton was informed by his scouts of the enemy's plans and so marched his force to the upper ford, Paso de Bartolo, to which point the Mexicans at once hastened, and there awaited the approaching Americans.

About two o'clock, on the afternoon of January 8, Stockton's army came in sight of the upper ford of the San Gabriel, where they in-

Digitized by Google

tended to cross. Squads of the enemy's horsemen on the opposite bank made it appear that a battle would now occur. The troops advanced slowly; their cattle were thin, and the ox carts which bore their baggage and provisions were mounted on clumsy wheels only two feet in diameter. Coming to the river bank, Stockton made ready for battle. As the enemy were finely mounted, and as his men were nearly all on foot, he arranged them in a rectangular formation, with the oxen and the baggage train in the center for protection against a sudden charge. The stream was about one hundred yards in width, knee deep, and flowing over a bed of quicksand. Its banks on either side were fringed with underbrush.

The American approach to the water's edge was level ground. The Mexican side was favorable for defense. The Mexicans were posted with artillery on a long hill or bank fifty feet in height, running parallel with the river and at pointblank firing range from the water. They commanded the passage with four cannon, supported by five hundred cavalry drawn up at easy distance.

Undismayed by this opposition, Stockton's

Digitized by Google

troops plunged into the water with a skirmish line thrown out in advance. When they were in midstream the Mexicans opened upon them with grape shot, but their aim was high and ineffective. In a very short time the United States soldiers had drawn their artillery across the river and up the opposite bank by hand and opened a destructive counter fire upon the Mexicans. A sudden attack upon the rear guard was repulsed. Within an hour and twenty minutes all the Americans with their baggage train had crossed and were charging the enemy. Scarcely had they gotten under motion than the Mexican cavalry made a desperate counter charge, only to be quickly driven off. Rushing up the hill, the United States forces found nobody to oppose them. That evening the enemy encamped in full view on the neighboring hills, but in the morning they had disappeared. Having but a handful of cavalry, the Americans could not discreetly follow them.

The battle of San Gabriel was ended.

On January 9, 1847, Stockton resumed his march toward Los Angeles, following the open plain to the left of the regular road. At noon

Digitized by Google

the Californians reappeared and began a long-range artillery duel, which, with one or two feeble cavalry charges, lasted for several hours.

On the morning of January 10 a flag of truce was brought to Stockton on behalf of the townspeople. They agreed to offer no resistance and were promised kind treatment by the Americans in return. About ten o'clock the army broke camp, advanced slowly up the river, and entered the city at noon with flying colors and martial music. There was scarcely any violence. A strong force, together with artillery, was posted on the hill overlooking the town. Captain Gillespie raised over his old quarters the flag he lowered four months before, and Los Angeles passed once more and forever into the possession of the United States on January 10, 1847.

The following day Stockton, as commander-in-chief and governor, issued an order congratulating the "officers and men of the southern division of the United States forces of California on the brilliant victories obtained by them over the enemy, and on once more taking possession of the Ciudad de Los Angeles."

Concerning the now famous city of Los An-

Digitized by Google

geles, Lieutenant Emory, who was with the victorious army, wrote in his diary on January 12, 1847:

The population of the town and its dependencies is about three thousand; that of the town itself about one thousand five hundred. It is the center of wealth and population of the Mexico-Californian people, and has heretofore been the seat of government. Close under the base of the mountains, commanding the passes to Sonora, cut off from the north by the Pass of Santa Barbara, it is the center of the military power of the Californians. Here all the revolutions have had their origin, and it is the point upon which any Mexican force from Sonora would be directed. It was therefore desirable to establish a fort, which in case of trouble should enable a small garrison to hold out till aid might come from San Diego, San Francisco or Monterey, places which are destined to become centers of American settlements.

On January 14 Frémont and his battalion arrived. There was but little disorder among the two commands except for the occasional hilarious effect of California wine upon the soldiers. The native forces broke up and went home or scattered in small detachments, several of which assembled at San Fernando, San Pascual, and Los Verdugos. Flores had transferred

Digitized by Google

his command to Andrés Pico and left for Sonora by the route of his predecessors, on the night of January 11. Because of his personal popularity the Californians chose to make peace with Frémont, and the "Treaty of Cahuenga," which followed, belongs to the story of Frémont.

Stockton's career ceases to be of real importance to the West after the final capture of Los Angeles. Following instructions from Washington he marched his men from that city on January 19 and later embarked on a man-of-war at San Pedro, having in the meantime reported a civil government in successful operation.

He left San Francisco on July 1, 1847, by the overland route, reaching St. Joseph, Mo., early in November. Returning to the Eastern States he inherited a large fortune, and resigned from the navy in 1849. Settling down in his native State, New Jersey, he was elected to the United States Senate in 1851, and he enjoyed high honors both in public and private life until his death, which occurred at Princeton on October 7, 1866.

As a naval and military leader Stockton had his faults. He loved personal glory and was often given to boasting, yet he deserves high recognition for the significant part he played in

Digitized by Google

winning the Southwest. He was an able leader and a brave man, who acted well his part. His honor is splendidly sustained today by a thriving California city which bears his name.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

"Uncle Dick" Wootton

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

III

"UNCLE DICK" WOOTTON

A STURDY pioneer was "Uncle Dick" Wootton, scout, Indian fighter, and all-around old-timer, who helped win and civilize the Southwest. Wootton was of Southern birth, and, to be sure, his loyalty to the Union was a little shaky during the Civil War, but his sympathy for the Confederate cause was sincere, growing out of hereditary convictions.

He never became a hero of national prominence, like Kit Carson or John C. Frémont. Perhaps Wootton lacked those qualities which make up "greatness" in a man's life, or perhaps — what is more than probable — he did n't care to be "great."

At any rate, "Uncle Dick" was a mighty man, who made history in New Mexico and Colorado. He lived for over fifty years on the frontier, where human lives were held cheaply, hunting, trapping, trading, farming, and fighting, because he loved the West and because his blood tingled with the spirit of adventure. He was another

Digitized by Google

of those daring, invincible men who led the van of civilization westward and who risked their lives to establish law and order that frontier civilization might endure.

Wootton helped found the cities of Denver and Pueblo, and he was among the very first to demonstrate practical farming in the Rocky Mountain country. He also won notoriety in building and successfully operating a famous toll road over the mountains through Raton Pass, which route was destined to be followed by a transcontinental railroad,—the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé. And the railway officials did not attempt to monopolize this strategic highway until after dignified and mutually satisfactory negotiations had been concluded with the old mountain man who held first possession. Later, after the Santa Fé line had pushed through the mountains and penetrated New Mexico, it secured, early in 1879, a monster locomotive, then the largest in the world, to haul traffic up the heavy grades to the Raton tunnel approaches, and in honor of Mr. Wootton this famous engine was named the "Uncle Dick."

It is thus because of his heroic record as a pioneer and pathfinder that Dick Wootton is

Digitized by Google

accorded an honorable place in the annals of the frontier.

Of course "Uncle Dick" had a full Christian name — Richens Lacy Wootton — and he was born the son of a planter in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, on May 6, 1816. He was of Scotch descent, his ancestors having been among the early settlers of Virginia. Like Kit Carson, young Wootton was taken West by his parents, his father locating in Kentucky when Richens was but seven years old. Here he lived ten years, during which interval he attended school part of the time and worked on a tobacco plantation. At the age of seventeen he went to Mississippi, where he spent about two years with an uncle in the cotton business. Wootton found business life irksome. Like Carson, he felt the mysterious call of the West, and, in the Summer of 1836, he made a journey to Independence, Missouri, then the greatest eastern terminus of the Santa Fé Trail. Here he found himself in a crowd of adventurous men — traders, hunters, trappers, and teamsters. What further inspiration did young Wootton need! He at once engaged his services with a wagon train bound for Santa Fé, and, like Kit Carson, he began a noted

Digitized by Google

career by taking a westbound trip over the old trail.

Wootton now became a Westerner and thorough frontiersman, which he remained to the end of his life. At the outset of his first journey across the plains he received the nickname which never left him. Who ever heard of any live American being called "Richens" by his associates? Consequently Richens Wootton became "Dick," and later in life "Uncle Dick" Wootton, by which names he is commonly known to fame and posterity.

When Dick left Independence in the Summer of 1836 he was not yet twenty, but he already had learned how to use a gun and could drive a team. According to his own statement he was not particularly in love with hard work, but was not afraid of it, and always was ready to do his share. Hence he was, by training and disposition, well fitted for caravan duty. He underwent the ordinary experiences which were due to any beginner in a trip across the prairies in those days, and readily adapted himself to the strict discipline which safety required all wagon trains to enforce while traveling in a wild Indian country. Dick managed to acquit himself well

Digitized by Google

and made no worse blunder than to shoot a mule which he mistook for an Indian prowler while he was on guard duty one night near the present site of Hutchinson, Kansas. Arriving at Pawnee Fork, the party was attacked, and Dick enjoyed his first Indian fight.

Shortly after this episode Wootton and several companions left the wagon train and journeyed up the Arkansas to Fort Bent, meeting Colonel St. Vrain while on the way. It was on this trip that Dick killed his first buffalo. His reputation as a skilled frontiersman now seems to have been pretty well established, for, after remaining a few weeks at the Fort, he was chosen to lead an expedition northward for the purpose of trading with the Sioux Indians in what is now Northern Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska. His party numbered thirteen men. Starting out with ten wagons loaded with beads, trinkets, blankets, knives, powder, lead, and some old guns, they soon reached the Indian country. Arriving at a village, the white men would first camp outside and learn as to whether or not the savages were in trading humor. If everything was favorable, the traders would load several pack mules with goods and establish their headquarters at the

Digitized by Google

lodge of some friendly Indian. This Indian was always appointed to stand guard over the goods in order to keep thieves away, and he was dressed up in a soldier's uniform which Wootton always carried for that purpose, and made to wear a tile hat ornamented with a red feather. He also was decorated with shoulder straps and required to carry a sword. These "officials" were always called "Dog Indians," but that had no effect upon their pride. As "Uncle Dick" says: "They would put on more style than militia brigadier-generals, and always took good care of our goods."

The chief articles of value which the traders sought of the Indians were buckskins, furs, robes, and ponies. Business was done entirely by barter, and money was seldom, if ever, used. Judging from all reports the white men got rather good bargains in these trades. For a butcher knife worth forty cents the savages would give up a buffalo robe worth several dollars. For a pound of powder, the percussion caps, and sixty bullets the traders received two robes. Wootton asserts that "Sometimes, when the Indians were inclined to drive hard bargains, we had to give them two common butcher knives for an extra

Digitized by Google

good buffalo robe, but even that, you know, left us a pretty fair profit. A good beaver skin cost us about thirty cents in trade, and it took three bullets and three charges of powder to get a nicely tanned buckskin."

In this manner "Uncle Dick's" party spent most of the Winter of 1836-1837, and, having exhausted their stock of merchandise, returned to Bent's Fort with about twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of furs and robes.

In the Spring of 1837 the Pawnee Indians were causing trouble, killing isolated persons wherever found and attacking caravans. On one occasion two herdsmen were killed within fifty yards of the fort, and the stock they were driving was stolen. Speaking of this, "Uncle Dick" said:

We got even with them, though, soon afterward, when we went out one day with a party of eight men to meet a wagon train coming through to the fort from the East.

At Pawnee Fork, the same place where we had the fight with the Comanches the year before, we struck a band of sixteen Pawnee Indians watching the trail and seeking an opportunity to rob some small party which could be taken at a disadvantage. There was a strip of country in that

Digitized by Google

region which the Indians always seemed to consider their best fighting ground, and it was a lucky wagon that got through without being attacked. The band of Pawnees that we ran across were on foot and we were on horseback, so that, although they outnumbered us two to one, the advantage was with us. While we could keep entirely out of reach of their arrows, we could still approach near enough to them to do very effective shooting with our rifles, and we killed thirteen out of the sixteen of them in the fight. The other three escaped by throwing down their tomahawks, bows and arrows and running up to our wagon train, which was in sight at the time.

It was n't customary to take any prisoners in those days of Indian warfare, but when an Indian came into camp in that way we observed the same unwritten law that governed most of the Indian tribes under similar circumstances. It was a custom of the Indians never to harm the man who came into their camp voluntarily, so long as he remained there, although, when he went away, they might follow and kill him before he had gone half a mile.

Another custom of the Indians was to spare at least one of their conquered enemies when they were at war among themselves. Bloodthirsty and vindictive as they were, and as near as one band sometimes came to exterminating another, one or two of the defeated braves were always left to carry the news of the slaughter to the friends of the slaughtered. We observed the same Indian rule in dealing with the three Pawnees who had made themselves our prisoners.

Digitized by Google

First we gave them as much as they could eat when we went into camp for the night, and after breakfast in the morning supplied them with food enough to last until they could reach a Pawnee village. Then we told them to go back to their friends and tell them what had happened, giving them fair warning that we intended to kill all the Pawnees if they did n't behave better in the future.

By this time Wootton had gained some practical knowledge of the fur business, and, since beaver skins were selling at about fifteen dollars apiece, he determined to organize a trapping expedition on his own account. Accordingly he got up a party of seventeen men and started out, fully equipped, in June, 1837. No better description of their equipment could be presented than that which Wootton himself gives:

Every man wore a full buckskin suit and a pair of moccasins. In a belt, which he always wore, he carried a couple of pistols, two large knives and a tomahawk. What we called a tomahawk was a kind of hatchet which we used to chop our meat up with, and, in fact, to do all the chopping that we had to do. In addition to this every man carried his rifle and ammunition enough to meet any emergency likely to arise. Our stock of provisions consisted of coffee, sugar, and tobacco. We did n't try to carry any flour, and never tasted bread from

Digitized by Google

the time we started out until we returned unless we happened to strike some fort or trading post.

Outside of our coffee and sugar, we lived altogether on wild game. You may think this would grow a little monotonous, but it did n't, as there were so many kinds of game in the country then we could have a change of meat every day. The different varieties of meat that we used to have sometimes in one day would make a famous hotel bill of fare nowadays. It was no uncommon thing for us to sit down to a meal with a buffalo steak, a piece of roast bear, a "hunk" of venison, elk or antelope, and a wild turkey before us. There was an abundance of all kinds of small game, such as rabbit, squirrel, pheasant, and partridge, and we got choice roasts out of the beaver, although this is a kind of meat that a great many persons have never heard of. These meats were roasted over our campfires, and I have never tasted meats cooked any other way which were quite as good as those we used to serve up in the trapper's camp.

These statements are reproduced merely to give a more adequate description of the early frontiersmen's experiences. On this particular trip Dick and his band went far northward into the Rockies, camping here and there, wherever good trapping could be found. Two of their number were cut off by the Indians, and the survivors escaped only after a desperate encounter. Returning to Fort Bent after an absence of nine

Digitized by Google

months, Wootton at once took his furs on to Westport, Missouri, where he successfully disposed of them, clearing four thousand dollars on his venture.

In the Autumn of 1838 Dick Wootton started on his most famous trapping expedition. Leaving Bent's Fort in September with a party of nineteen men, he again worked northward, following the Arkansas to its source, trapped nearly all the streams of Northern Colorado, thence into Utah, back to Wyoming, into Montana as far as the Yellowstone, and thence westward through Idaho along the Snake and Salmon Rivers to the Columbia.

Pushing on to Vancouver, they sold a portion of their furs and started southward through Western Washington and into California, striking the Pacific Coast at San Luis Obispo. From thence they journeyed into Southern California, spent some time along the Colorado River, and, late in the summer, started up through Arizona to Utah, and finally eastward once more to old Fort Bent.

The trip lasted two years and extended over five thousand miles through a country menaced by savages. Five of the party were killed by

Digitized by Google

the Indians, but, after incredible adventures, Wootton brought the remainder of his men back in safety. This journey easily duplicated the best performances of Carson and Frémont.

After his return, in the Fall of 1840, "Uncle Dick" gained the lasting and, as it later proved, valuable friendship of the Arapahoe Indians while traveling from Fort Bent to Taos. It seems that this tribe and the Utes had been at war, in which the former had been defeated, many Arapahoe women and children having been taken prisoners. The weather was cold, and, while passing through the mountains, Wootton and his men found an Arapahoe squaw, nearly starved and frozen, who had escaped from her Ute captors. Taking her to his camp, "Uncle Dick" treated her kindly, and after being well fed she was able to start out and rejoin her people. The Arapahoes, on learning that one of their number had been so well treated by a white man, at once came to meet Wootton, warmly thanking him and forcing him to accept two ponies as an expression of their gratitude.

Subsequently Dick entered the employ of Fort Bent as professional hunter, it being his business to supply the men with fresh game. It was at

Digitized by Google

this time, late in the year 1840, that he tried his famous experiment of buffalo farming on the present site of the city of Pueblo. Building an ordinary stock corral, Wootton successfully domesticated forty-four young buffalo, selling them three years later at a handsome profit. He might have continued this business on a large scale but that the mountains and that strange love of adventure kept Dick Wootton out of all steady business until late in life.

In his capacity of hunter he had many thrilling experiences with wild beasts and Indians while on long journeys in pursuit of game. On one of these trips his horse gave out and Dick found himself in a hostile country, thirty miles from the nearest point of safety, which was a friendly Arapahoe village. There was nothing to do but walk, and, after concealing his saddle in the snow, where it might be found later, he lost no time in moving on, at the same time keeping a sharp lookout for the Pawnees, who were then on the warpath. Everything went well until he was within a few miles of his destination. It was mid-afternoon when "Uncle Dick" noticed a number of suspicious looking objects approaching from the crest of a hill about a quarter-mile

Digitized by Google

distant. It needed but a second glance to assure him that these objects were Pawnees — nineteen of them — who, like himself, were traveling on foot. Wootton's only hope was to run to the Arapahoe village, now but six miles away, and no sooner did he quicken his pace than the savages gave a war whoop and started after him. Now, to use "Uncle Dick's" words:

Two of the bucks shot ahead of the others at the beginning of the race, and, as I glanced over my shoulder from time to time, I saw that they were gaining on me. The others soon fell behind and I made up my mind that I could escape if I got rid of the two Indians nearest to me. One of them was by this time within two hundred yards of me and the other about a hundred yards behind him. Exhausted as I was by a run of two or three miles, I was by no means certain that my aim would be steady enough to kill him if I turned and fired at that distance from the foremost of my pursuers, and if I missed, with an empty rifle and the two Indians so close, the chances would be very much against me.

Fortunately just at that time I had to run over a little hill, which hid me for a moment from the Indians as they were coming up on the other side. At the foot of the hill I stopped, raised my gun to my shoulder and waited until the foremost Indian reached the crest of the hill. That brought him within a hundred yards of me, and when my gun

Digitized by Google

cracked he dropped. I knew from the way he fell that he was a dead savage and that there was no danger of his following me any further. I ran on, loading my gun for the other Indian as I ran, but when I looked back again he had fallen so far behind that he was out of reach of a bullet. He waited until the balance of the band came up and then they all followed me until they caught sight of the Arapahoe village for which I was headed.

Before I reached the village the Arapahoes saw me and knew from the way I ran that I was being pursued. About forty warriors mounted their horses and came galloping out to meet me. I was so nearly exhausted by the long run that I couldn't mount the horse which they offered me to go with them in pursuit of the Pawnees when I told them what was up, but they went back without me, while I made my way into the village.

Without going into further details, Wootton was, of course, warmly received by his friends the Arapahoes, whose warriors, true to Indian custom, killed all but one of the attacking party, coming triumphantly into camp that evening with seventeen Pawnee scalps.

In 1842 Dick took charge of an express service making weekly trips between Fort Bent and Fort St. Vrain, going occasionally to Taos, New Mexico. Between these points Bent and St. Vrain carried on a large business, and Wootton

Digitized by Google

was often intrusted with many valuables, on one occasion forwarding sixty thousand dollars in silver, which was transported on pack animals. Yet, as he says, "I was always fortunate enough to get through safely and never lost a dollar intrusted to my care."

During the years 1843-1845 "Uncle Dick" spent the fall and winter months trading once more with the Indians. Much of the time he was among the Utes and Apaches out on the Mexican border. Summer generally found him in Eastern Colorado, where he hunted and furnished supplies of game for Fort Bent. This period, like his entire active life, was filled with stirring experiences, scarcely a week passing which did not witness some hair-breadth escape from death.

In January, 1847, occurred the well-known revolt in Northern New Mexico and the bloody massacres at Taos and Arroyo Hondo, in which Governor Charles Bent, together with many Americans and a large number of friendly Mexicans, were murdered. This rebellion was quickly put down by Colonel Price, assisted by Captain Burgwin and Colonel St. Vrain. Enlisting his services with the Santa Fé Volunteers under Burgwin, Wootton fought with great

Digitized by Google

bravery in the storming of La Iglesia de Taos, an old adobe church where the rebels, strongly fortified, were all killed or scattered after a desperate resistance. In this battle Wootton probably saved St. Vrain's life while the latter was having a hand-to-hand fight with an Indian.

Shortly after the battle at Taos, "Uncle Dick" again rendered distinguished service to the United States Government by acting as scout and guide for Colonel Doniphan's expedition of eight hundred men from Santa Fé to Chihuahua, Old Mexico. On this trip it was his responsible duty to keep Doniphan informed as to the presence of enemies, select the easiest and most practicable ground to march over, find watering places, and choose camping grounds.

As much of the route lay through a desert country, infested by hostile Indians and Mexicans, this was no easy task, but Wootton made good.

When only eighteen miles from Chihuahua he was sent back to Santa Fé with important Government dispatches. The country was rough and dangerous, but Dick preferred to make the journey alone on horseback. This he successfully did, reaching Albuquerque in nine days,

Digitized by Google

and, after resting twenty-four hours, he at once pushed on to Santa Fé, where he safely delivered his messages.

For several years after this exploit Wootton made Taos his headquarters. He was there in the winter of 1848-49, when the half-starved and frozen members of Frémont's fourth expedition made their way to the town after a horrible experience in attempting to cross the Uncompaghré Mountains. It was Wootton who ran across Frémont's party and brought them into town, and he led Frémont to the home of Kit Carson, while other members of his band were cared for at various places in the city.

In March, 1848, "Uncle Dick" accompanied Colonel Newby's force of six companies of soldiers, as guide, in a campaign against the Navajos. On this expedition he gave great assistance to the Government and succeeded in making peace with the Indians after the military officer had failed.

Following the Mexican War, times were dull on the frontier for two or three years. The West was in comparative peace, and, of course, many of the soldiers were removed from that country, which greatly retarded the trade of such

Digitized by Google

communities as Santa Fé, Taos, and Albuquerque. The discovery of gold in California enlivened matters, but, as Dick had married and settled down in Taos, he did not join the rush of treasure seekers for the Coast. As a substitute adventure, he busied himself in a fruitless but daring exploration of a number of abandoned mines in different portions of New Mexico. Then he began trading again with the Indians, this time with the Comanches. In 1851 he went to St. Louis, where he purchased a big stock of merchandise for his business.

The following year Wootton heard that provisions were scarce around the gold diggings in California, and he began to itch for some new excitement. Like Kit Carson, he determined to make a speculation in mutton, and so Dick collected a flock of nine thousand sheep and, accompanied by twenty-two men, drove the entire herd through to California, the whole distance extending through hostile Indian country. This was outdoing Carson's performance, for, it will be remembered, the latter had but six thousand five hundred sheep on his journey to the Coast. Wootton reached his destination in the Sacramento Valley with eight thousand nine hundred

Digitized by Google

of his original flock, after a journey of one hundred and seven days. He had faced some grave dangers from the Utes and mutinous employes, but his proverbial luck stood him well in hand and the venture proved a financial success. He returned by the southern route with fourteen thousand dollars in gold and more than double that amount in St. Louis drafts stowed away in his saddle bags. With eleven traveling companions he safely made the trip from Los Angeles to Taos in just thirty-three days.

Early in 1854 "Uncle Dick" decided to try the ranch business, having located some land on the Arkansas near the Huerfano, about twenty miles from Pueblo. It was first necessary to erect some kind of structure as a protection against the Indians. He says:

I went down there with a number of workmen and in a short time had completed a very substantial fortress. What I intended should be my dwelling house, built of logs, was protected by a high wall and stockade, and at two corners of the surrounding wall, diagonally across from each other, I put up strong bullet-proof bastions. From one of these bastions I could see two sides of my fort, and from the other the opposite two sides, so that in case of an attack I was prepared to receive an enemy coming from any direction. My location

Digitized by Google

was just above where the two rivers came together, and altogether the position was one which could be easily defended. I built a kind of primitive ferry-boat, with which to get back and forth across the river, and then I had everything in readiness for the reception of my family.

Wootton's family came out in the summer of 1854, and here he remained over a year, growing crops, raising cattle, and trading with passing emigrants. His business is said to have prospered, but, save for one Indian scare, this was too quiet a life for "Uncle Dick." Again that old longing for excitement came over him. He therefore formed a partnership with a Joseph Doyle, and went into the freighting business.

By terms of the agreement Wootton was to have active charge of the enterprise, running the wagon trains, while Doyle was to be a silent partner. Their plan was to forward goods over the Santa Fé Trail from Fort Union, New Mexico, to Kansas City, one round trip eastward each summer, spending the balance of the year freighting for the Government between Fort Union and Albuquerque.

Wootton's wife having died, he removed his children to Fort Barclay in the Winter of 1856, and on March 1 he started from Fort Union on

Digitized by Google

his first trip for the new firm. This enterprise was profitable and Wootton kept at it about four trips across the plains, one of these journeys extending from Atchison to Salt Lake City.

For hauling merchandise from Kansas City to Fort Union they received eight dollars per hundredweight. The overland wagons would carry from six to ten thousand pounds each, and their trains averaged nearly forty wagons. Teamsters could be hired for twenty dollars per month, and forty or fifty men and four hundred oxen could handle a train of this size. The expenses were not proportionately heavy. There were dangers, to be sure, but that was what Wootton wanted, and his love for the open life was gratified. Incidentally the firm made a lot of money.

In the Autumn of 1858 "Uncle Dick" concluded his business at Fort Union and decided to go back to the "States" to live. But first he must make a farewell trading trip among the Indians. He never settled in the East. Packing up several wagons with goods, he traveled northward from Fort Union, through Trinidad and Pueblo, to where Denver now stands. There he found several hundred gold-seekers encamped on

Digitized by Google

Cherry Creek, waiting for spring weather so they might begin prospecting. Two townsites had been laid out — Cherry Creek and Auraria, now West Denver.

The settlers wanted merchandise, and when "Uncle Dick" drove his wagon train into the little town they prevailed upon him to unload his goods and start a store, which he did, locating in a log cabin. His little stock was soon sold, and, as trade continued to grow, a number of property owners got together and decided to offer him an inducement to remain with his store. Accordingly, as money was scarce, they gave him one hundred and sixty acres of land, and Wootton stayed. He erected a two-story log building, the first "business block" in Denver, and his business grew rapidly. In 1859 the first newspaper — now the *Rocky Mountain News* — was started, on the second floor of "Uncle Dick's" store.

Thousands of persons were now coming into Colorado, and among them were many reckless characters. Violence and crime at first grew rapidly, but the determined spirit of Dick Wootton and other men of his type stood strongly for law and order. Effective courts of justice and

Digitized by Google

vigilance committees were formed, and eventually the "bad men" were either hanged or driven out of the country.

In 1862 "Uncle Dick" sold out his business and his land, which now is in the heart of the great city of Denver. Had he retained this property, unlimited wealth would have been his, but he still loved the open. While he lived to see the financial error he made in leaving Denver, he never seems to have regretted the move. As he himself said late in life:

> If I had remained there and grown up with the Capital City, I might have become a rich man and had a big hotel or an opera house or something of that sort named after me.
>
> I reckon I should n't have felt right though after the buildings got too thick. There would have been a lack of room and breathing space and I might have been expected to wear fine clothes. I should have been jostled about on the streets and should have had the noise and dust of the city instead of the singing of birds and the pure air of the mountains that I have here.

When he left Denver, the Civil War had broken out, checking immigration into the West. The population of Colorado and Denver, its chief city, while always fluctuating, now fell off

Digitized by Google

in numbers. Times were dull, and, to say nothing of sentiment with regard to living in the open country, Wootton believed he had struck a poor location.

So he again entered the ranch business, on the Fountaine River, one hundred and eighteen miles south of Denver. Here, as "Uncle Dick" says, "I again became a 'squatter' on the site of a future city, without ever dreaming of any such thing." He built his farmhouse on the site of old Pueblo and near the abandoned fort, directly where the modern city of Pueblo now stands. A townsite had already been laid out, but people were loath to settle there because of a dreadful massacre that had occurred at the fort several years previous, in 1854. In fact, the place was thought to be haunted when he located there.

Meanwhile the War of the Rebellion was raging. The Confederates had invaded New Mexico, and, at first successful, they intended to occupy both that Territory and Colorado. But they were decisively defeated in the battle of Glorieta Mountain, and were finally driven back into Texas. Feeling ran high. The population of these Territories was mixed, comprising both Northern and Southern people, and much divided

Digitized by Google

sympathy existed. Speaking of himself, "Uncle Dick" stated as follows:

I was one of those looked upon by the Territorial Government as an erring brother, and subjected to some little discipline as a consequence. Having been born in Virginia and raised in Southern Kentucky, I was essentially a Southern man, and, naturally enough I think, was very strongly in sympathy with the Southern States. Those who know me well know I have never hesitated to express my opinions, and so I came to be looked upon as rather a pronounced rebel.

At any rate, "Uncle Dick" never did anything worse than "express his opinions," and he never got into worse trouble than to be chased half-way from Denver to Pueblo when the war feeling was at its height. It is no time now to wave the "bloody shirt." The great war has faded into memory, and, after the last word has been said, the services of Dick Wootton on behalf of the American people must go to the credit side of the ledger.

Dick farmed extensively along the Fountaine River, and he was probably the first man to prove that grain of all kinds could be raised in Colorado. Corn and wheat were his specialty, and his hundred-acre cornfield attracted attention

Digitized by Google

from far and near. But two years of this business was enough. In the summer of 1864 cloudbursts and hail ruined his crops, and, as "Uncle Dick" said, "I again soured on farming."

He claims to have long had in mind the building of a stage road through Raton Pass, and when he quit farming at Pueblo he thought the time favorable for pushing his project.

From his long experience in the mountains, he fully realized that this pass was of strategic importance and destined to connect many settlements. Furthermore, Barlow and Sanderson, proprietors of the Santa Fé stage line, were anxious to change their route so as to go through Trinidad, which had now become an important town.

It was a difficult matter to get over the pass. Only a trail then led through the cañon, which was impassable to vehicles during the Winter. Undaunted by these obstacles, Wootton, in the Winter of 1865, secured from the Colorado and New Mexico Legislatures two charters which respectively authorized him to construct a toll road from Trinidad, Colorado, to Red River, New Mexico.

The following spring he established himself

Digitized by Google

at the north end of the pass, and with a large force of men started work. To use his own words:

> I had undertaken no light task, I can assure you. There were hillsides to cut down, rocks to blast and remove, and bridges to build by the score. I built the road, however, and made it a good one, too. That was what brought the Santa Fé Trail through this way, and as the same trail extended to Chihuahua, in Mexico, my twenty-seven miles of turnpike constituted a portion of an international thoroughfare.

Wootton appears to have made this project a paying investment, and as keeper of the toll road he had plenty of exciting dangers to contend with, yet he doubtless enjoyed that feature of his business. According to his own account he had five classes of patrons — the stage line and its employes, the freighters, the military authorities and troops, Mexicans, and Indians. With the first three classes he never had any trouble. He cheerfully allowed the Indians to pass without detaining them for revenues. Both Indians and parties in pursuit of horse thieves were exempt from paying toll. With the Mexicans there was always more or less trouble. Dick claims, "They seemed to look upon the tollgate

Digitized by Google

as a new scheme for 'holding up' travelers for the purpose of robbery, and many of them evidently thought me a kind of freebooter who ought to be suppressed by law." Yet Dick generally managed to get what was coming to him, and held to his business.

His experience as tollkeeper, with cattle and horse thieves, Indians, and desperate characters in general, would fill a volume. On one occasion, in 1865, a Mexican corporal named Juan Torres was murdered by some of his men in Wootton's yard, and a monument erected in honor of the unfortunate victim may still be seen by passengers along the railway.

Meanwhile a railroad was coming. Slowly but invincibly it was pushing its way across the Kansas prairies, where the buffalo and Indians still roamed. By 1878 it had crossed the Colorado line, where its course divided, one branch going north and the other pushing southward directly toward "Uncle Dick's" tollgate.

The railway represented the overwhelming advance of permanent civilization. Its construction marked the last step in winning the Southwest. No region can be fully won until it is fully occupied and settled, and no region can be

Digitized by Google

fully occupied and settled until it has adequate railroad facilities. The mission of modern railway transportation has been to colonize and develop the Southwest by extending those needed facilities; its mission has been to supplement the historical achievements of Houston, Kearny, Carson, Stockton, Frémont, and Custer, and to coöperate with the true American spirit in building an industrial empire upon the foundations of military conquest.

The coming of the railroad took "Uncle Dick" from the limelight. To borrow his words again:

> My toll road was a success financially, from the time I completed it up to the time it was paralleled by the Santa Fé Railroad. Then I got out of the way of the locomotive and turned my business over to the railroad company.

That was in 1878.

The railway men treated Wootton with respectful courtesy, and the old fellow, even though he saw his business doomed and his adventurous career ended, extended his best hospitality to the newcomers.

It will be remembered by many that, when the Santa Fé line was built through Raton Pass, the Denver & Rio Grande "War" was on and that

Digitized by Google

a lively struggle ensued between those corporations for possession of this coveted bit of highway. Speaking from memory, Mr. A. A. Robinson, who was then chief engineer for the Santa Fé, had the following to say with regard to Wootton's early relations with his company:

I remember being at "Uncle Dick's" house (since burned) in Raton Pass with William R. Morley the night before the D. & R. G. and A. T. & S. F. War, so called, broke out, but I don't remember the date. It was in the winter. We were advised about 11 P. M. by messenger from Trinidad that the D. & R. G. was moving a force of graders through the country back of Trinidad into the Raton Pass.

On receipt of this news, Morley and myself went to Trinidad, and from the town and its people we organized and had in the pass by 5 A. M. the next morning several grading outfits at work grading on our line. One of these forces consisted of "Uncle Dick," nearly single handed. He began work on the north approach of what is now Raton Tunnel by lantern light.

Uncle Dick always was friendly to the Santa Fé, and out of gratitude for his services, since the railroad took away his toll business, the company officials authorized for him a credit of fifty dollars per month for supplies at one of the stores in Trinidad. This aid was continued for

Digitized by Google

many years, and, after Wootton's death, it was granted to his widow.

The last years of "Uncle Dick's" life were spent in quiet retirement in his comfortable home at the foot of Raton Pass. He had remarried several years after the death of his first wife, which occurred in 1855 or 1856, and, surrounded by his family, he remained to the end amid the mountains which he so loved. He died on August 22, 1893, at the ripe old age of seventy-seven years.

Not long ago the old Wootton property passed into the hands of a group of Eastern capitalists, who have enlarged and transformed it into an immense ranch and game preserve. While having a practical eye for mining, lumber and other natural resources, these gentlemen have shown great regard for the proprieties of history. To-day, passengers on the Santa Fé, as their train nears or leaves the south approach to Raton Tunnel, still may see the old Wootton homestead as "Uncle Dick" left it, the house and surroundings having been carefully restored by the present owners.

In "Uncle Dick" Wootton an interesting character has been contributed to American his-

Digitized by Google

tory. It is Western men of his type — sincere, possessed of rugged simplicity and true to self — who make up the fabric of real Americanism. In every sense of the word Dick Wootton was a true Westerner — and the West is to-day, always has been, and always will be, the most American part of America.

Digitized by Google

IV

SAM HOUSTON

IT was a bright afternoon in the early Autumn of 1813. For more than a year our second war with Great Britain had been going on with but little gained on either side. Yet great dangers threatened the country. By sheer force of numbers the British were slowly but surely driving our little navy off the seas. The Indians of the South were in dangerous revolt. The Atlantic Coast was threatened, and the frontier was in peril.

Before a humble dwelling in Eastern Tennessee a widowed mother handed to her son, a youth of twenty, an old army musket, exclaiming: "There, my son, take this musket and never disgrace it, for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave than that one of them should turn his back to save his life. Go, and remember, too, that, while the door of my cottage is open to brave men, it is eternally shut against cowards."

And Sam Houston never forgot those words.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Sam Houston

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Already possessed of a doubtful reputation for having been a wayward and reckless boy, the future hero of Texas was now to stake his future career by enlisting as a private in the regular army. Of course, the neighbors talked about it; they always do. And the general verdict was that young Houston was headed straight for perdition, with army life as the final leap. But they overlooked the spark of an uncommon heredity, and the inspiration of an exceptional mother's training. Time had many things to reveal.

The character of General Sam Houston stands out strong in American history. A reckless youth, an Indian chief by adoption, a school teacher, lawyer, politician, member of Congress, duelist, Governor of two States, confidential agent of the Federal Government, a brave soldier of masterful talent, President of a republic whose independence he won, a leader whose genius was foremost in adding more than a quarter of a million square miles of territory to our national domain, a United States Senator, a candidate for the Presidency, gallantly devoted to his family, and, to the last breath, loyal to the Union and his beloved Texas — all this was Sam Houston. Few

Digitized by Google

careers have been so full of romantic achievement.

This narrative will not give a detailed account of Houston's entire life. It will go into the Texan-Mexican controversy no further than necessary to give proper setting to the story. So far as space permits, it will aim to describe the most important feature of Houston's work in winning Texas at the battle of San Jacinto.

Sam Houston was born near Lexington, Rockbridge County, Virginia, on March 2, 1793. His ancestry on both sides were of fighting stock, Scotch-Irish, who had settled in Pennsylvania in 1689. They seem to have fought in all the wars that were possible for them to join, both in Scotland and in Ireland.

Young Houston's father had a great passion for military life, serving with some distinction in the Revolutionary War. He was a man of but moderate means, and died while in the military service, in 1806, leaving a widow and nine children. Left fatherless at the age of thirteen, Sam is said to have received a large amount of courage and a powerful frame as his only inheritance.

The mother seems to have been a remarkable woman. She is described as rather tall, dignified,

Digitized by Google

womanly, and gifted with intellectual and moral qualities that distinguished her from ordinary women. Possessed of a gentle and sympathetic mind, she was also endowed with great courage, which never forsook her during the trials of widowhood, nor in the perils of frontier life. Such, briefly, were Sam Houston's parents — the sturdy stock of which heroes are made.

While the father was alive, the family were in comfortable circumstances, but after his death, the burden of support fell upon the mother. Accordingly she sold her little home, and took her family westward, over the Allegheny Mountains, settling in the Cherokee Indian country, in what is now Blount County, Tennessee. Here a pioneer home was established, and a hard struggle for subsistence begun.

As a boy, young Sam was "never much on schooling." While in Virginia he attended a rural school probably six months. He also seems to have studied for a short time in the academy at Maryville, Tennessee. Like nearly all great men, he read two or three choice books, particularly a translation of Homer's *Iliad,* which doubtless fired his imagination. He was not long in revealing an interesting personality. Having been

Digitized by Google

compelled by poverty and the clamors of his brothers to clerk in a trader's store, he soon tired of the monotony, and disappeared. He was afterward found living with the Cherokees, where he remained almost continually for four years. During this period he learned the Indian language, adopted their dress, and was even made a sub-chief. At the age of eighteen, he found himself considerably in debt for ammunition and trinkets, purchased during his wild life. Returning to civilization, he decided to raise money to pay off his obligations by teaching school. This he did successfully.

In 1813, as already stated, he enlisted in the regular army, at the age of twenty. From this point his career rapidly rose. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant, and later ensign, by President Madison. Joining General Jackson's army in the campaign against the Creeks, he took a gallant part in the battle of Horseshoe Bend, Alabama, March 29, 1814. During the fight he received an Indian arrow in the thigh and two bullets in the shoulder. From the latter wound he never fully recovered. But his bravery won for him a lieutenant's promotion and the lifelong

Digitized by Google

friendship of Andrew Jackson, who was later destined to become the most powerful man in American public life.

In 1818 Houston resigned from the army, and, after six months of study, was admitted to the bar, his great eloquence having been, it is said, his chief qualification. In 1820-1822 he was prosecuting attorney for the district including Nashville. In 1823-1827 he was a member of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Congresses. While serving in this capacity he fought a duel with General William White, and Houston, although unhurt, badly wounded his antagonist. He was elected Governor of Tennessee in 1827 by a large majority. Just prior to his second election, he had, in January, 1829, married a wealthy society girl of Nashville. The marriage was unhappy. Finding that his wife was in love with another man, and that she had married him merely to please her family, Houston released her from her marriage vows, resigned his office, and suddenly disappeared.

He was next found living with the Cherokees, near the present site of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Here he remained about three years, during which

Digitized by Google

time he is said to have married a half-breed woman. It is also claimed that he tried to "drown" in whiskey the matrimonial sorrows of his past life. How well he succeeded in this attempt may be judged by the fact that the Indians nicknamed him "Big Drunk." Having reported a number of Indian agents to the Government for fraudulent dealings, he, of course, made some political enemies. Visiting Washington, dressed as an Indian, in 1832, he enjoyed the distinction of thrashing an Ohio Congressman. For this breach of etiquette he was, after three trials, fined five hundred dollars, which amount President Jackson kindly remitted.

Late in the year 1832 Houston was commissioned by the President to go into Texas and arrange treaties with the Comanches and various other Indian tribes, to secure protection for American settlers on the Southwestern frontier. He accepted the honor, and accordingly began living at Nacogdoches, in Eastern Texas. His Indian wife, though invited to accompany him, refused to leave her people in the Arkansas country. No children were ever born to this marriage, and she thus passes from notice.

Digitized by Google

Sam Houston now began a new stage in his great career, and, with this introduction, the story will now discuss the part he played in winning the Southwest.

A revolt was fomenting in Texas in 1832. Both the United States and Spain had disputed for this region, after the former had purchased Louisiana from France in 1803. In spite of this contention, Texas remained a nominal possession of Spain. Meanwhile the Spanish-American colonies rebelled and set up republican governments. In 1824 the States of Mexico, now free and independent, organized under a Federal Constitution, by the terms of which the original provinces of Texas and Coahuila had been merged into a single state, with the reserved privilege of separate statehood as soon as they had sufficient population.

Texas was, in the meantime, becoming Americanized. Moses Austin, a New Englander, had obtained from the Mexican Government a large tract of land for the purpose of encouraging colonization, and had settled three hundred families upon it. In spite of hostile Indians, many other Americans were attracted to this country by its

Digitized by Google

fertile soil and delightful climate. This gradual occupation by American pioneers was destined to settle the possession of Texas.

The Mexican Government was, as yet, unstable, and a struggle had forthwith arisen between two military leaders, Bustamente and Santa Anna. The former had tried to subvert the Constitution of 1824, and the soldiers throughout Texas had favored him. The latter had declared himself a friend and supporter of the Mexican Constitution, and the colonists everywhere, approving him in the Civil War, which he had started in Mexico and spread to Texas, had expelled the military authorities, whose usurpations had hitherto been endured. The fortunes of both these leaders were fickle, but Santa Anna reached the height of power in 1832, winning the Presidency of Mexico the following year.

Following his earliest successes, he seems to have assumed a dictatorship that soon became intolerable, even to his own countrymen. In fact, of whatever infamy has been ascribed to the Mexican name during this period, the greater portion should rest upon Santa Anna.

Texas, at first, desired separate statehood. In

Digitized by Google

view of the treatment she had received from the mother country this seems to have been a moderate request. The Mexican Government had ceded away large tracts of Texas land, on the pretext of raising money with which to protect the frontier against Indians. Yet, of the revenues thus gained, she had not appropriated a dollar for her avowed purpose. Mexican troops, when sent to Texas for protection, were invariably stationed in towns on, or near, the seaboard, where there was no danger from Indians. A military force thus arranged could easily overawe the population, while the colonists along the frontier had to protect themselves against a dozen or more hostile Indian tribes as best they could. Discontent was widespread. If separate statehood could not be secured, a Texan revolt was inevitable. But peaceable means were first to be attempted, and, with a view to solving their political troubles, the Texans had planned to hold a constitutional convention in April, 1833.

Such was the situation when Houston arrived at Nacogdoches, in December, 1832. According to his leading biographer, he had planned to become a ranch owner, keep out of politics, and

Digitized by Google

spend the balance of his life on the prairies, devoting but a portion of his time to Indian affairs as an agent of the Government.

He was almost immediately invited by the people of Nacogdoches to become a candidate for election to the proposed constitutional convention. He is said to have hesitated before accepting this honor, as he craved the free life of a private citizen. Yet, how could he refuse? The opportunity of supporting a great cause, of erecting a state—perhaps a nation—lay before him. He was still young — scarcely past middle age. The prospects of this region were vast. Here was a splendid chance, even in a revolution, to prove himself to the world once more. Sam Houston's ambition stood by him. He decided to try public life again, and accepted the nomination. While the election was on he made a journey to Natchitoches, Louisiana, probably at the request of President Jackson, to make a confidential report concerning Indian matters. Returning soon to Nacogdoches, he found he had been unanimously elected.

The convention met at San Felipe de Austin, on April 1, 1833. This was a significant affair — the first deliberative body of Anglo-Saxons

Digitized by Google

that ever assembled within the limits of the ancient Spanish-American empire. It was really the first definite step toward our acquisition of the great Southwest.

Within thirteen days a State Constitution was drawn up, and a memorial address to the Mexican Government adopted. The former document was formed with great care, in order to secure, if possible, the full approval of the mother country. The latter set forth the reasons why Texas should be recognized as an independent state. Among others, it declared that she would thus be able to negotiate terms with hostile Indians, and secure their rights to lands which had previously been promised by Mexico. Stephen F. Austin, William H. Wharton, and James B. Miller were appointed commissioners to bear the Constitution and memorial to the capital, but, after some delay, Austin set out alone for Mexico City.

In view of Santa Anna's supposed friendliness for constitutions, it was believed that Austin would be well received. But in this they were disappointed. Austin was offered but slight encouragement, and failed to accomplish anything. On his way home, he was seized, by order of the Mexican Government, taken back to the capital,

Digitized by Google

and, without formal accusation or trial, thrown into a dungeon. Austin was a pure and upright man, a patriot respected by all his fellow citizens. News of his ill-treatment nearly provoked a revolt, but Houston, knowing that Texas was unprepared for war, succeeded in having hostilities postponed. After several months of loathsome imprisonment, Austin was released by Santa Anna.

The colonists were, in the meantime, chafing under harsh Mexican laws and edicts. Texan commerce was badly restricted. Dishonest officials were sent to administer customs. Taxation was oppressive. The people had been baffled in all their efforts to secure justice. Large sums of money had been extorted from them in obtaining titles to lands which they had, with great labor, improved, and which Mexico had guaranteed to them. Finally Santa Anna issued an edict, ordering the people to surrender their private arms. To say nothing of Mexican treachery, this was merely to expose women and children to the fury of savage Indians. Furthermore, many colonists depended upon their guns to secure wild game for subsistence. Needless to say this edict would be resisted. History shows no instance of

Digitized by Google

Anglo-Saxons tamely submitting to disarmament.

In the little town of Gonzales, on the Guadaloupe River, about seventy miles east of Bexar, was a small brass cannon, a gift to the city, which was kept for defense against the Indians. In compliance with Santa Anna's orders, Colonel Ugartchea, with a strong force of cavalry, advanced to take this gun. The colonists made ready, and, early on the morning of October 1, 1835, a force of one hundred and sixty-eight men, under the command of Colonel John Moore, attacked the Mexicans, who fled in panic, leaving several dead upon the field. No Texans were killed, but the Lexington of Texas had been fought. All colonists were now rising in arms.

Meanwhile, the Mexican general, Cos, was marching up from the Gulf to Bexar, and he reached that point on October 9. That same night a force of fifty Texans, under Captain Collingsworth, attacked the garrison at Goliad, and took it without resistance. Austin was at first elected commander-in-chief of the forces in West Texas, and Houston was placed in command east of the Trinity River. A general alarm was spread to the Sabine River, and Eastern Texas, which had hitherto been more or less

Digitized by Google

indifferent, now rose to a man. Committees of vigilance and public safety were organized in the towns of Nacogdoches and San Augustine. An invitation had also been sent by the people of the County of Brazoria, and favorably responded to by other municipalities, to elect delegates to a general consultation to devise means of safety in case of danger.

War with Mexico now seemed a foregone conclusion, though it must be remembered that the entire population of Texas, at this time, did not probably exceed thirty thousand souls.

While Austin's army, now numbering nearly one thousand men, was besieging General Cos at Bexar (now San Antonio), Colonels Bowie and Fannin, on October 27, won the important battle of Concepción. In this engagement one hundred Texans defeated four hundred Mexicans, killing or wounding one hundred of their number.

On November 3, 1835, the consultation — so-called — met in a little one-room building in San Felipe de Austin, with fifty-five delegates present. All writers agree that Sam Houston, of Nacogdoches, was the leading man in this assembly.

Digitized by Google

The consultation elected Branch T. Archer president, and remained twelve days in session. A provisional State Government was organized, with Henry Smith president *pro tem.* Sam Houston was made commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas, superseding Stephen H. Austin, who wished to be relieved. A provisional declaration of independence was finally issued, asserting, among other things, that the bad faith of Mexican military authorities had overthrown their own institutions, and thereby dissolved the bond of union between Texas and Mexico. Texas, while no longer bound to the Mexican union, would yet help such other states as would take up arms against military despotism. The document, further, declared the intentions of the Texans to expel all Mexican troops from the country. Texas would be responsible for the expenses of her own armies, meet all her obligations in good faith, and reward her volunteers with land donations. Yet, in spite of these things, she would still remain faithful to Mexico, so long as that nation adhered to the Constitution of 1824.

Houston at once issued a call for five thousand volunteers, although the country was without

Digitized by Google

money, and was cast upon its own resources. Commissioners were sent to the United States to negotiate a loan, but they accomplished little.

On December 5 a force of two hundred men, under Colonel Benjamin R. Milam, attacked San Antonio, which was held by General Cos and a large force. After a series of desperate assaults, Cos surrendered, five days later, with one thousand one hundred men (mostly convicts), after having sustained a loss of one hundred and fifty. On December 14 he and his men were paroled and allowed to return home. That same day, by Santa Anna's order, twenty-eight American prisoners were brutally shot at Tampico. As there were now no Mexican troops left in Texas, the majority of the Texan soldiers were at once discharged, only two small garrisons at Goliad and San Antonio being left to guard the western and exposed part of the State.

Houston alone appears to have been able to foresee that the fight for independence had only begun; so he started at once to raise an army with which to meet the inevitable crisis. As a special inducement to those who would enlist as regular soldiers, he offered a bounty of twenty-four dollars and eight hundred acres of land to

Digitized by Google

each man. Volunteers in the auxiliary corps would receive a similar sum of money and six hundred and forty acres.

During the Winter of 1835-1836 the Texan cause was seriously threatened, because of dissension in the Government. Jealousy was the chief cause of trouble. Governor Smith could not agree with the council, and was jealous of the power which it had given to a certain executive committee that had already met in San Felipe. The result of the situation was to block all active authority. Houston's feeling is best expressed in a letter he wrote to Governor Smith at this time, in which he said:

> No language can express the anguish of my soul. O save our poor country! Send supplies to the wounded, the sick, the naked, and the hungry, for God's sake! What will the world think of the authorities of Texas? Prompt, decided, and honest independence is all that can redeem them and save our country. I do not fear. I will do my duty.

Upon two men — Colonel J. W. Fannin and a Dr. Robert Grant — must rest the heaviest blame for two great tragedies in Texas history. Fannin had been appointed a colonel in the regular army. Grant was a Scotchman, who held large posses-

Digitized by Google

sions in Coahuila. According to good authorities, he cared nothing for Texas, but merely espoused their cause to forward his own self-interests. He aroused Western Texas to send an expedition southward to Matamoras. Although this enterprise took most of the available men from Goliad and Bexar, it was disastrous. Houston at once ordered these posts abandoned, but his orders were unheeded. He fell back to the Brazos River to await developments.

In the meantime Santa Anna, true to Houston's prediction, was advancing upon Texas with an army of several thousand Mexicans. During February, 1836, he had marched his soldiers across the five hundred miles of desert on either side of the Rio Grande. On February 23 his advance guard took Bexar without opposition. The little garrison, commanded by Colonel Travis, and containing such men as Colonel James Bowie and Davy Crockett, had retired to the Alamo, an old mission half a mile north of the town. On the following day, after Santa Anna had laid siege to this small fort with four thousand men, Travis sent through their lines to his Government that famous message:

Digitized by Google

I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for twenty-four hours and have not yet lost a man. The enemy have demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the fort is taken. I have answered their summons with a cannon shot and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. Then I call upon you in the name of liberty, patriotism, and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with dispatch. The enemy are receiving reinforcements daily. Though this call may be neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible, and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or death.

Texas had finally awakened from her apathy. A delegation assembled at Washington, on the Brazos, and on March 2, 1836 — the forty-third anniversary of Houston's birth — declared for absolute independence.

While the convention was in progress, Travis' message arrived. Unable to send relief to the doomed command, the feelings of these men can scarcely be described. One delegate even proposed that the fifty-five delegates present should march to the assistance of the Alamo.

On March 5 the Alamo fell. The world knows how the little garrison fought — one hundred and

Digitized by Google

seventy-six Americans against five thousand Mexicans. The Americans were slain to the last man, but they died hard. The Mexicans lost five hundred and twenty-one men killed, and as many more wounded, in overpowering this handful of defenders. "Thermopylæ had its messenger; the Alamo had none."

Meanwhile, Colonel Fannin, who was at Goliad with four hundred men, had been repeatedly urged by Houston to retire before attacked by overwhelming numbers, and join his force at Gonzales. Disobedient to wise authority, Fannin did not move until about March 19. Advancing but a few miles, he was surrounded at Coleta by a superior force, under the Mexican General Urrea, and, after a brave resistance, forced to surrender. Fannin's force consisted mainly of United States volunteers. They were marched back to Goliad as prisoners of war. On the evening of March 26 Colonel Portilla received orders from Santa Anna to shoot these prisoners, in compliance with a Mexican law, which declared that all foreigners landing in the Republic with arms should be treated as pirates.

To quote now from the historian Bancroft:

"The dispatch reached Portilla's hand at seven

Digitized by Google

o'clock on the night of the twenty-sixth. The Americans, unconscious of their impending fate, were cheerful and buoyant with the hope of soon being sent back to their homes. Several of them, on that evening, played in concert on their flutes the air of 'Home, Sweet Home.'

"Portilla passed a restless night, and not till morning dawned did he decide to carry out the barbarous but imperative order. The whole garrison was drawn up under arms; the prisoners were aroused from their sleep, formed into three divisions, and marched out of the town in different directions. Their questionings were satisfied with various explanations. The victims in one band were told they were going to Copano to be sent home; of another that they were wanted to slaughter beeves; and the third, that room in the fort was required for the reception of Santa Anna. Four doctors were not called out. It was Palm Sunday (March 27, 1836). Each line marched in double file, with a guard of soldiers on either side.

"Half a mile from the fort the order was given to halt. The file of soldiers on the right passed through the prisoners' line, and in a moment after, the whole guard poured in a volley upon them.

Digitized by Google

Nearly all fell, a few survivors only escaping into the long grass of the prairie, some of whom, eluding their pursuers, gained the river.

"The first division to suffer was that which had been led out on the road to the lower ford, but the sound of distant volleys in other directions soon after told those at Goliad that the murderous work was being consummated elsewhere. For an hour after the first firing, the ring of intermittent shots smote on the ear, producing in the listener's mind a terrible picture of flight and chase, of the hunter following his unarmed prey through the tall grass and the dark weeds, of the fiendish eagerness of the one to kill, and the desperate struggles of the other to escape. Over three hundred victims were put to death in this cold-blooded butchery, without a warning, without a moment in which to prepare for death and send home a farewell or even a prayer!

"Twenty-seven only escaped. Miller's company was not included in the first massacre. The wounded were dragged from the barracks an hour later and shot. Fannin was reserved till the last, and he met his fate with a soldier's calmness and bearing. He gave his watch to the officer in command of the firing platoon, with a request

Digitized by Google

not to be shot in the head and to be decently buried. He was shot in the head, nevertheless; nor was he interred, his corpse being cast among the bodies of the other dead."

After the slaughter, the bodies of the dead were stripped of clothing, the naked corpses piled in heaps, upon which brushwood was thrown, and set afire. Even this work was badly done. For many days after, the hands and feet of the poor victims could be seen. The odium of this awful crime lies upon General Santa Anna.

The fortunes of Texas now rested with Sam Houston and an army of about six hundred and fifty men. So greatly disheartened had the Texans become over their losses at the Alamo and Goliad that Houston had much difficulty in keeping his organization together; yet, in the end his leadership prevailed. He determined to retreat before the advancing Mexicans, and await a favorable opportunity to give battle. Concerning the Texan crisis, Houston wrote:

> Humanity must recoil at the perfidy which has been exercised toward brave and heroic men, who have perished in the unequal conflicts with the enemy, when they were always more than six to one. A day of retribution ought not to be deferred.

Digitized by Google

Breaking camp, Houston at once marched toward the Brazos, and reached San Felipe, twenty-eight miles away, in less than twenty-four hours. On the night of March 29 the army camped at Mill Creek, and the next day their destination, opposite Groces, was reached. A steamer, the "Yellowstone," which was found at this landing, was at once pressed into the service for future use. The force remained here until April 11. As the Brazos was running high, Houston stationed his men on a small island in the river, where they were secure from attack. Connection with the mainland was established by means of a narrow bridge, over which the scouts could pass and keep close watch on the enemy.

Houston's first plan had been to surprise the Mexicans as they approached San Felipe, believing that their own confidence in superior numbers and recent successes would make such a scheme feasible. But by the time he learned of their arrival there, the water was at flood stage, and, as three unfordable streams intervened between him and San Felipe, he had to give up the idea. He did, however, leave a small detachment entrenched on the east side of the river at that point, to harry the Mexicans, and apprise him of their

Digitized by Google

movements. The main body of his army at Groces did not probably exceed five hundred and twenty men. He had hoped to secure five hundred volunteers from the Redlands district, but a rumored Indian uprising seems to have kept the people of that locality in defense of their homes, until too late to help the army of Texas.

From his scouts Houston soon learned the location, strength, and plans of the enemy. They were advancing in three divisions. The center, under Santa Anna, was to move from San Antonio to Gonzales, thence to Beasons, and by San Felipe or Washington to Nacogdoches.

The second division, under General Urrea, was to march from Goliad, by way of Victoria, to Brazonia and Harrisburg. The upper, or third command, aimed to march by Bastrap to Tenoxtillan, on the Brazos, thence to the Comanche crossing of the Trinity, and on to Nacogdoches.

Houston had to break up this strategy. How it could be done nobody but himself knew. To quote a biographer: "There was no longer a doubt in the mind of any who knew the position of affairs that the salvation of Texas under God had been thrown entirely upon Houston's arm."

As his position on the Brazos enabled him to

Digitized by Google

cover a large extent of country, and was easily accessible for supplies, Houston boldly planned to deal with the Mexican divisions in separate detail. On April 11 he was informed that the center, under Santa Anna, had crossed the river at San Felipe, and was moving forward. Fortunately for Houston, the upper division of the Mexicans, under Gaono, became confused and marched up the banks of the Colorado River — in the wrong direction — while the southern division, under Urrea, was delayed by high water, and never crossed the Brazos.

Alarmed by Santa Anna's invasion, the Texan Government had broken up in terror at Washington, and adjourned to Harrisburg, about seventy miles from the seat of war. Hearing of this, the Mexican leader decided to diverge his route from Nacogdoches to Harrisburg, hoping, thereby, to capture the insurgent officials. Aware of this plan, Houston assembled every available man, and crossed to the east bank of the Brazos, on the steamer "Yellowstone." On the shore he received his first artillery — two small brass six-pounders, (nicknamed later the "Twin Sisters"), the gift of some sympathetic men in Cincinnati. These guns were not fully equipped, but, in a con-

Digitized by Google

venient blacksmith shop, a quantity of old iron was cut up into slugs of the right size.

Following Santa Anna's line of march toward Harrisburg, Houston's army, now numbering between seven and eight hundred men, with fourteen baggage wagons and the two cannon, set out on April 16. The first day they traveled eighteen miles, to McArleys. Heavy rains had made the prairies boggy and almost impassable. The wagons often had to be unloaded, and the cannon dismounted and rolled or carried through the mud. The next day they marched through the rain to Burnett's settlement, a distance of twelve miles, sleeping on the ground that night, with their guns in their hands. The third day they traveled eighteen miles, camping for the night at Post Oak Bayou, about seven miles from Harrisburg. Approaching the latter place, the following morning, it was found that Santa Anna had burned the town near this point. Karnes and "Deaf" Smith, while scouting, intercepted dispatches which proved that Santa Anna was very near. Houston and Secretary of War Rusk, who was with the Texan army, at once decided upon battle. In fact, the Texans were anxious to fight, and were almost in sedition because of their im-

Digitized by Google

patience and their inability to understand their leader's tactics.

Marching at once to Buffalo Bayou, they succeeded in crossing. Drawing up his men, Houston delivered an eloquent speech, ending with the now famous watchword, "Remember the Alamo!" About noon, as the march started, the sun came out for the first time since the long, dreary period of rain had begun. Moving cautiously, the men advanced to a spot within four or five miles of the battlefield, and encamped in the shelter of a grove.

It was now early morning, and the little army had taken but an hour's rest, when the scouts reported that the enemy was marching up from New Washington, to cross the San Jacinto, which, if effected, would spread desolation to the Sabine River. Houston's only move was to head off the Mexicans at, or near, the San Jacinto, and his force, starting without delay, succeeded in reaching the ferry at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto before Santa Anna's army came in sight. The battle, which followed, was fought near the present city of Houston.

Houston chose his position in a grove of trees, on a bend of the stream, which lay in a semicircle

Digitized by Google

on the edge of the prairie. The trees and underbrush enabled him to conceal his forces on the river bank, and, at the same time, plant his artillery on the brow of the thicket. Scarcely had the Texans made ready to fight, when the enemy appeared and immediately attacked, but, on receiving the fire from Houston's artillery, retired to the shelter of a neighboring patch of timber, which was within rifle range of Houston's left wing. This preliminary engagement took place about ten o'clock on the morning of April 20, doing but little harm to either side.

Houston was determined not to fight until thoroughly ready, and Santa Anna finally located his men on a slight elevation in the prairie near the Bay of San Jacinto, about twelve hundred yards distant. That night Houston is said to have remarked to an officer: "On the morrow I will conquer, slaughter, and put to flight the entire Mexican army, and it shall not cost me a dozen of my brave men."

In spite of the protests of his soldiers, he would not permit a general engagement that day or night. The Texans went into camp and partook of the first refreshments they had enjoyed for two days.

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile, the Mexicans pushed out their right flank, so as to occupy the outer point of a strip of timber on the bank of the San Jacinto, while fortifying their left with a breastwork about five feet high, made of packs, saddles, and baggage. Supporting this wing was their cavalry, with their artillery in the center — which was the line of battle they used the following day.

That night Houston lay down under a tree, with a coil of artillery rope for a pillow, and slept soundly — the first rest he had received for many weeks. Worn out by the sufferings of uncertainty, waiting for troops and supplies that never came; grieved by the disasters that had befallen his country at the Alamo and Goliad; vexed by the dissensions of a fickle Government — in spite of these obstacles, Sam Houston and a force of half-clad and poorly armed soldiers, had finally placed themselves to give decisive battle with a well-equipped enemy that outnumbered them two to one.

Yet Houston had laid his plans. The opportunity of his life was now at hand, and his mind was at rest. Soundly he slept till the sun rose the next morning. Springing to his feet, saying, "The sun of Austerlitz has risen again," he

Digitized by Google

calmly began giving orders for the day. Selecting two good axes, he sent for "Deaf" Smith, and, taking him aside, told him to conceal them where they could be secured at a moment's notice. About nine o'clock Santa Anna was reinforced by five hundred and forty men, under General Cos, who, having heard the artillery the day before, had hastened with a neighboring detachment to assist his commander-in-chief.

Finding that his men were eager to fight, Houston determined to take the aggressive, and attack.

Again sending for "Deaf" Smith and a companion, both well mounted, he gave this order: "Now, my friends, take these axes, mount, and make the best of your way to Vince's bridge, cut it down, and burn it up and come back like eagles, or you will be too late for the day." Smith is said to have replied: "This looks pretty much like a fight, General."

As both armies had crossed this wooden bridge, on their way to the battlefield, there remained no hope for the vanquished.

It was now three P. M., on April 21, 1836. The Mexicans still kept behind their breastworks, showing no apparent desire to fight. Houston at

Digitized by Google

once formed his line of battle, which, according to his own statement, was as follows: In the center, the First Regiment, under Colonel Burleson. To their right was the artillery, under Colonel George Hockley, supported by four companies of infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Millard The cavalry, sixty-one in number, under command of Colonel M. B. Lamar, were placed on the extreme right. The left wing was formed by Colonel Sherman and the Second Regiment.

The cavalry were at first sent out before the enemy's left wing, while Houston's army formed. Everything was now ready, and the battle line at once advanced in open across the prairie to within two hundred yards of the enemy's breastwork. when the "Twin Sisters" at once opened an effective fire of grape-shot and slugs. In the armies now lined up there were, according to Bancroft, seven hundred and eighty-three Texans attacking, at the very least, one thousand five hundred and sixty-eight Mexicans. Houston ordered a charge, and gave the battle cry, "Remember the Alamo," and, as from one man, those words, "Remember the Alamo," went screaming from the throats of the Texan army. At the same instant a rider dashed up on a horse, covered with

Digitized by Google

mud and foam. Swinging an ax over his head, he rushed down the lines, shouting, "I have cut down Vince's bridge! Now, fight for your lives, and 'Remember the Alamo!'"

Instantly the Texans broke restraint, and leaped forward, with one mighty impulse, upon the enemy. The fight was on, and the Mexicans were ready. Holding their fire until the Texans were within sixty yards, the Mexicans poured forth a volley, but their aim was high, and most of their bullets did no harm. Houston was one of the very few of the attacking party to be injured. His ankle was crushed and his horse was wounded in several places.

The Mexican guns were empty. The Texans, almost within reach of their breastworks, now delivered a death-dealing volley that played havoc in the ranks of their foes. No time to reload now! The Mexicans had bayonets. The Texans had none, but they had bowie knives, and they could use their guns as clubs. The fight was now hand to hand. In the history of warfare no incident can surpass the ferocious attack of Houston's men upon Santa Anna's troops in the battle of San Jacinto. Shattering their guns over the skulls of Mexicans, they emptied their revolvers

Digitized by Google

with telling effect. The knives yet remained. The rest of the conflict was simply a slaughter. The Mexicans fought with courage, but they could not withstand the vicious onslaught of their adversaries. Some, finding resistance useless, tried to run, only to be stabbed in the back. Others fell on their knees, exclaiming, "Me no Alamo! Me no Alamo!" and pleaded for mercy.

While this fierce charge had taken place at the center, the Mexican right and left wings had also been put to flight. They had made a bold resistance, and even countercharged the Texans. A Mexican division, five hundred strong, assaulted the battalion of Texas Infantry, but the latter, though outnumbered three to one, under the personal direction of Houston, demoralized their assailants with a single volley. The Texans then charged through the smoke, and, of the five hundred Mexicans who made the attack, but thirty-two remained as prisoners of war.

Houston was suffering badly from his bleeding wound, and his horse was nearly dead, yet he pressed on, and was everywhere in the battle, watching his men. Those Mexicans who remained were now in full retreat, and, seeing that the battle was won, he gave orders to cease fight-

Digitized by Google

ing, if the enemy would surrender. But it was not easy to recall the watchword, "Remember the Alamo." The Texans were now chasing their surviving foes across the prairie, and the killing went on. Somewhere among the running fugitives was General Santa Anna, who had fled, on a swift horse, with the first approach of danger. Coming to Vince's bridge, they found their retreat cut off. Many jumped into the stream, and were drowned while attempting to swim across. Scores were shot while in the river, and the bodies of dead and wounded men and horses nearly choked the passage of the stream. In the deep marsh, by the Mexican camp, at the rear of the battle, a similar scene was enacted. Many men mounted on horses or mules plunged into this mire, only to be submerged forever, or shot down by a murderous Texan rifle fire.

Many thrilling episodes could be cited from this historic battle. Here is one as related by General Rusk:

During the fight "Deaf" Smith, though on horseback, fought with the infantry. His party had nearly reached the Mexicans, with Smith galloping ahead. Just in front of the enemy's line the horse stumbled, throwing Smith head first among the

Digitized by Google

Mexicans. His sword dropped in the fall. Drawing a pistol he aimed at the head of a Mexican, who was about to bayonet him. The pistol missed fire, but hurling it against the Mexican's head, Smith seized his gun as he staggered back. By this time the Texan infantry had arrived, and a general scrimmage was in progress. Smith was not seriously hurt.

Resistance finally ceased, and the battle ended. General Almonte was already a prisoner, and Santa Anna was missing. Returning to his camp, Houston, exhausted from loss of blood, fell from his horse into the arms of General Hockley.

The immediate results of this victory were nine hundred stands of English muskets, three hundred sabres, two hundred pistols, three hundred mules, one hundred valuable horses, provisions, clothing, tents, ammunition, and twelve thousand dollars in silver. The independence of Texas was won. The Alamo and Goliad massacres were avenged. Mexico, herself trampled upon by ambitious military leaders, had been forced to suffer a severe penalty. At the outset the Texans had only asked for the Constitution of 1824 — they would not bow to a dictator who had overridden the Constitution of his own country — and in the end they had fought in self-defense.

Digitized by Google

In the battle of San Jacinto the Mexicans lost six hundred and thirty men killed, two hundred and eight wounded, and seven hundred and thirty prisoners. The Texan loss was six killed and twenty-five wounded, two of whom died later.

On the following afternoon Santa Anna, disguised as a common soldier, was taken prisoner while attempting to crawl away in the grass. Summoned before Houston, he readily consented to withdraw all Mexican troops from Texas.

Santa Anna was held a prisoner for more than a year as a pledge of good faith on the part of his countrymen. While he fully deserved death, his captors deemed it more discreet, in the eyes of the world, to respect his life, which was done.

This story will attempt no long discussion of the events following the fight at San Jacinto. Suffice to say that Sam Houston was twice elected President of the young Republic, and, as President and a member of the Texan Congress, his statesmanship saved the honor of his Government, and secured for it the recognition of several foreign nations, the United States included. It is most fitting to insert here, that in 1841 Houston was happily married to a Margaret Lea, of Alabama, a noble woman, whose influence for

Digitized by Google

good upon him was profound. As a husband, father, and private citizen, to say nothing of distinguished public service, the conduct of Sam Houston, during the last twenty years of life, was above reproach.

With Texan independence established, annexation to the United States was to be expected. It was peopled largely with Americans. The Government was modeled after that of the States. Texas was directly within the sphere of United States influence. She was too naturally within the reach of Federal domain to be easily eluded. Whatever may have been the motives which this country had in annexing Texas — whether as a political game to increase Southern slave territory; whether as an ambitious national project, or whether from humane motives — regardless of purpose, it was inevitable. It was "manifest destiny," for Texas lay directly in the path of the westward American movement, which was destined to sweep from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific coast. And Sam Houston, the hero of San Jacinto, deserves the lion's share of the honor in winning Texas.

Subsequent to the admission of Texas to the Union, in 1845, Houston served with honor in

Digitized by Google

the United States Senate, from 1846 to 1859. In 1859 he was elected Governor of his State. In 1856 and in 1860 he received considerable support as a Presidential candidate.

The last days of his life were saddened. Texas chose to join her sister Southern States in the secession movement of 1860. Houston, now an old man, bitterly opposed secession, and declared for the Union. But he was in a hopeless minority in the South. Opposing the secession convention, he was finally deposed from the office of Governor. To his greatly increased sorrow, even his own son joined the Confederate ranks. He died, heartbroken, at Huntsville, Texas, on July 26, 1863, three weeks after Vicksburg and Gettysburg were fought. Yet he lived to see the death blow of the Confederacy.

For some weeks before his death he was confined to his bed, and finally relapsed into a comatose condition, from which he could not be aroused. A few hours before the end came, his voice was feebly heard, and anxious watchers caught the words, "Texas, Texas!" His life was now fast ebbing into the sea of eternity. A short pause, and then his lips moved, audibly speaking one word, "Margaret," the name of his

Digitized by Google

devoted wife, who sat at the bedside. Then, to quote the words of a daughter, Maggie Houston Williams, than whose no better expression could be uttered: "As the sun sank below the horizon, his spirit left this earth for the better land. The loving father, the devoted husband, the incorruptible patriot was gone."

Thus a great American passed away, but the achievement of his life — a mighty commonwealth — lives on to perpetuate his fame.

Digitized by Google

Stephen W. Kearny

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

V

STEPHEN W. KEARNY

STEPHEN W. KEARNY won New Mexico* for the Union and assisted in the conquest of California in the year 1846. That was an eventful period in American history. The annexation of Texas in 1845 led directly to a war with Mexico, which country, besides other alleged grievances, still claimed that Territory. In April, 1846, Mexico declared war, and emphasized her intention by sending her famous generals, Ampudia and Arista, across the Rio Grande and into the hotly disputed region lying between that river and the Nueces.

A few weeks later the United States reciprocated Mexico's policy and ordered General Zachary Taylor with a strong force to advance to the Rio Grande.

The inevitable clash came on April 24, 1846, when the Mexicans attacked an American cavalry

* What is now Arizona remained a part of New Mexico until 1863, when the Territorial division was made.

Digitized by Google

detachment on the northern or eastern side of that river. On May 8 and 9 Taylor won the important battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The Mexican War was now on and excitement filled the country.

About the middle of May, 1846, Congress passed an act authorizing President Polk to call for fifty thousand volunteers. While this call was loyally responded to, only seventeen thousand men were actually needed. It was originally planned to operate against Mexico from three points. A southern wing or Army of Occupation, under General Taylor, was to penetrate the heart of that country. An Army of the Center, under General Wool, was to operate against Chihuahua, and an Army of the West, under General Kearny, was to march against Santa Fé.

Such was the original plan against Mexico, but later it was changed. General Scott was sent to Vera Cruz; General Wool effected a junction with Taylor at Saltillo, and General Kearny divided his force into three separate commands. The first he led in person over the Santa Fé Trail to Santa Fé and thence on to the Pacific. The second command, under Colonel A. W. Doniphan, was ordered to descend from New Mexico into

Digitized by Google

Chihuahua, there to coöperate with General Wool. The third division, under Colonel Sterling Price, was left to garrison the town of Santa Fé.

The present story is concerned mainly with the so-called Army of the West and its leader, Stephen W. Kearny. This force was organized at Fort Leavenworth, mostly from Missouri volunteers, Governor Edwards of that state having made requisition for men in pursuance with the War Act of Congress. Kearny had discretionary orders from the War Department as to the size of the command needed and the desired proportion of cavalry and infantry. Owing to the great distance across the plains, cavalry appeared to be the more efficient organization for the desired service, and hence the entire Army of the West, with the exception of one battalion, was made up of mounted men.

By June 18, the full set of companies having arrived for the First Regiment, Alexander W. Doniphan, a private who had previously won distinction in a campaign against the Mormons and in politics, was chosen colonel. C. F. Ruff was elected lieutenant-colonel, and William Gilpin major. The regiment contained eight companies, numbering eight hundred and fifty-six men. In

Digitized by Google

addition to this body the army contained a battalion of light artillery, comprising two companies of two hundred and fifty men from St. Louis, under Major Clark; a battalion of infantry from Cole and Platte Counties, Missouri, one hundred and forty-five men, under Senior Captain Augeny; the La Clede Rangers, of St. Louis, one hundred and seven in number, under Captain Hudson, and the First United States Dragoons, three hundred men. When fully assembled, Kearny thus had sixteen hundred and fifty-eight men, who were supported by sixteen pieces of artillery.

Four companies, two of volunteers and two of dragoons, were at once sent ahead over the trail to capture, if possible, the trading caravan of Messrs. Speyers and Armijo, which caravan, it was thought, furnished with British and Mexican passports, would provide the enemy with war supplies. About one hundred wagons loaded with army provisions also were sent ahead for future use.

On June 26, 1846, the main body of the Army of the West commenced its march of about one thousand miles from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fé. Colonel Kearny and the rear guard followed

Digitized by Google

three days later. In commenting upon this expedition the following excerpt from the Liberty (Mo.) *Tribune* is a good sample of the patriotic feeling of that time:

> There is a novelty in this anabasis or invasion of Colonels Kearny and Doniphan. For the first time since the creation, the starred and striped banner of a free people is being borne over almost one thousand miles of trackless waste, and the principles of republicanism and civil liberty are about to be proclaimed to a nation fast sinking in slavery's arms and fast closing her eyes upon the last expiring lights of religion, science, and liberty.

The line of march from Fort Leavenworth aimed to intersect the Santa Fé Trail at the Narrows, about sixty-five miles west of Independence, Missouri. There was then no road nor path leading from the fort to this point. Since heavy rains had been falling, the army experienced much difficulty in erecting bridges and building roads across this muddy stretch of prairie. The trail was found to be lined with the annual trading caravan from Independence to Santa Fé — four hundred and fourteen heavily loaded wagons. This train traveled with or near Kearny's army for customary protection.

On July 2 the Army of the West, moving in

Digitized by Google

detachments, left the Narrows and set out upon the old trail bound for Santa Fé. Fort Bent, on the Arkansas, six hundred miles west of Independence, was to be the first point of rendezvous. This historic structure stood on the north bank of the river, six hundred and fifty miles west of Fort Leavenworth. It was rectangular in shape, one hundred and eighty feet long by one hundred and thirty-five feet in width; the walls, built of adobe bricks, were fifteen feet high and four feet thick. Although built through the enterprise of one man, Fort Bent had been converted into a Government depot not long before Kearny's command arrived. Here it was that traders' caravans assembled to await the protection of troops before resuming their dangerous journey. Here also many army wagons were unloaded and sent back to Fort Leavenworth for fresh supplies. At Fort Bent the army was rejoined on July 30 by the advance detachment which had unsuccessfully pursued Speyers and Armijo's command.

After a rest of three days Kearny's command started for Santa Fé, on August 2. The line of march followed almost the present route of the Santa Fé Railway. The first day they marched twenty-four miles, camping on a bare sand beach

Digitized by Google

near the Arkansas. On the morning of the third they struck off at right angles from the Arkansas, from a point a few miles north of the Timpa. Here a stretch of parched desert country was encountered, much suffering ensued, and many of their animals died.

On August 3 and 4 they camped on the "bitter, nasty waters" of the Timpa. On August 5 the Purgatoire (Picketwire) River was reached. The next day they reached the foot of Cimarron Peak. The Spanish Peaks and the Cordilleras could be seen looming in the distance. On August 7, to use the words of a soldier in the expedition, "a narrow defile called Raton Pass" was reached. Here the wagons had to be hauled up the rocky acclivities and lowered again by means of ropes. On August 8 they reached the ridge which divides the waters of the Purgatoire and Cimarron. Moving steadily forward the army was rejoined near Poni on August 11 by Lieutenant De Courcy and his band, who, returning from Taos with fourteen Mexican prisoners, reported to Kearny that the New Mexicans, aided by five thousand Indians, were making every effort to resist the American advance. By August 15 they had reached New Mexican settlements. For more

Digitized by Google

than two weeks the soldiers had been suffering from lack of food, for, after entering New Mexico, the army subsisted on one-third rations until it reached Santa Fé. Had the region been treated as a conquered province, abundant supplies might have been seized from the Mexican ranch owners, but orders not to molest the property nor persons of peaceable citizens were strictly enforced.

Reaching Las Vegas on August 15, Kearny received news of his promotion from colonel to brigadier-general. Here he also learned that a force of two thousand Mexicans were encamped in the cañon about six miles below the town, awaiting battle. Drawing up his artillery and forming his men in line of battle, Kearny lingered at Las Vegas just long enough to administer the oath of allegiance to the chief men of the town. They were allowed to swear by the crucifix instead of by the Bible, as customary. Hurrying forward, the American army found that the enemy had retreated post haste; a bloodless victory had been gained.

Pushing on to Tecolate and San Miguel, where again the oath was given to the native inhabitants, Kearny camped on the night of

Digitized by Google

August 16 on the Pecos near San José. Here two Mexican prisoners were deliberately shown through the American camp and then released. Going at once to their army, they are said to have reported that the American command contained five thousand men and cannon too many to count. Meanwhile the advance continued.

When Governor Armijo learned with certainty that Kearny was approaching Santa Fé, his capital, he at once assembled by proclamation about seven thousand troops, two thousand of whom were well armed, and marched out to the cañon or pass of Galisteo, about fifteen miles from the city, to fight. This cañon is a deep chasm through the mountain ridge, which divides the waters of the Pecos from the Rio Grande. Under ordinary circumstances a corporal's guard of well-equipped men could hold this pass against an army, but Armijo seems to have been unable to screw up his courage to the sticking point. Approaching the cañon in battle array and fully expecting trouble, Kearny's men again found nobody to oppose them. The Mexican army of about seven thousand men, together with six cannon, and occupying an almost impregnable position, had evacuated before the Americans

Digitized by Google

came within gunshot. Armijo fled along with the rest — probably at the head of the procession — in the direction of El Paso, and when next heard of he was safe within the State of Durango, far down in Old Mexico. It is stated, as an excuse for this conduct, that Governor Armijo, General Salezar, and other Mexican leaders had disputed for the first rank in command. Since the common people were peaceably disposed toward the invaders, they had used this squabble as a pretext for deserting, and Armijo was thus left without soldiers. Whatever the case may have been, the Mexicans lost a splendid opportunity to fight, and the little American army, now numbering fewer than sixteen hundred men, slipped through the narrow defile unopposed.

On August 18, 1846, after a weary march of nine hundred miles in fifty days, General Kearny and his force entered Santa Fé, and in the name of the Government of the United States raised the American flag and took peaceful possession, without the shedding of blood or the loss of a man. As the flag unfurled to the breeze a national salute of twenty-eight guns was fired

Digitized by Google

from the hill east of the town by Major Clark's batteries.

Kearny had received confidential instructions from the Secretary of War, dated June 3, 1846, which ran as follows:

Should you conquer and take possession of New Mexico and Upper California, you will establish temporary civil governments therein, abolishing all arbitrary restrictions that may exist so far as it may be done with safety. In performing this duty it would be wise and prudent to continue in their employment all such of the existing officers as are known to be friendly to the United States and will take the oath of allegiance to them. You may assure the people of those provinces that it is the wish and design of the United States to provide for them a free government, with the least possible delay, similar to that which exists in our own Territories. Then they will be called upon to exercise the rights of freemen in electing their own representatives to a Territorial Legislature. In your conduct you will act in such a manner as best to conciliate the inhabitants and render them friendly to the United States.

Acting in complete harmony with these orders, Kearny assembled the citizens of Santa Fé on the morning of August 19 and addressed them, through his interpreter, Robidoux. Here is the

Digitized by Google

major portion of his speech; it is well worth repeating:

New Mexicans! We have come among you to take possession of New Mexico, which we do in the name of the Government of the United States. We have come with peaceable intentions and kind feelings toward you all. We come as friends to better your condition and make you a part of the Republic of the United States. We mean not to murder you nor rob you of your property. Your families shall be free from molestation, your women secure from violence. My soldiers will take nothing from you but what they pay for. In taking possession of New Mexico we do not mean to take away your religion from you. Religion and government have no connection in our country. These all religions are equal; one has no preference over another; the Catholics and Protestants are esteemed alike. Every man has a right to serve God according to his heart. When a man dies, he must render to his God an account of his conduct, whether good or bad.

In our Government all men are equal. We esteem the most peaceable man the best man. I advise you to attend to your domestic pursuits — cultivate industry, be peaceable, and obedient to the laws. Do not resort to violent means to correct abuses.

I do hereby proclaim that, being in possession of Santa Fé, I am therefore virtually in possession of all New Mexico. Armijo is no longer your governor. His power is departed. But he will return and be one of you. When he shall return you are

Digitized by Google

not to molest him. You are no longer Mexican subjects; you are now become American citizens, subject only to the laws of the United States. A change of government has taken place in New Mexico and you no longer owe allegiance to the Mexican Government.

I do hereby proclaim my intention to establish in this Department [corresponding in a modern sense with "State"] civil government on a republican basis, similar to those of our own States. It is my intention also to continue in office those by whom you have been governed, except the governor, and such other persons as I shall appoint to office by virtue of the authority vested in me. I am your governor. Henceforward look to me for protection.

The general then inquired of the inhabitants if they were willing to take the oath of allegiance, and, on receiving a favorable reply, he administered to all of them the following oath:

Do you swear in good faith that, under all circumstances, you will bear allegiance to the laws and Government of the United States, and that, through good and evil, you will demean yourselves as obedient and faithful citizens of the same, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?

These words seemed to appeal strongly to the emotions of the people, for they immediately set up a great "Hurrah for General Kearny," and

Digitized by Google

one aged Mexican, weeping, rushed forward and embraced him. Kearny gave a similar oath to various delegations from different pueblos who came into the city to offer submission. Tranquillity and general satisfaction seemed everywhere to prevail.

In scanning our military history the Army of the West in New Mexico is a source of both regret and pride to the present generation of Americans. This body of brave men who left their homes, endured the horrors of a long and dangerous march, and risked their lives to make a permanent conquest which added a vast domain to this nation — it is painful to observe that these men were poorly provisioned, poorly outfitted, and that they suffered from hunger much of the time while in New Mexico. The army did not have enough good teams to meet the troubles of mountain travel, thus compelling the men in many instances to perform the work of the beasts. The commissary and quartermaster departments were also badly managed, with the result that scarcely more than half rations could be secured.

But the conduct of this army reflects everlasting honor upon American soldiery and Kearny's discipline. Though at times nearly starving, and

Digitized by Google

in a country abounding with flocks and choice farm products, these soldiers, according to good authority, took not even a melon, an ear of corn, chicken or sheep for which they did not pay the owner in money. The Mexicans believed, and had even been taught by their priests and rulers to think, that they would be robbed and murdered, and the entire country ravaged by the Americans. However, the generous and fair treatment which the United States Army accorded to New Mexico had a consoling, quieting effect. In this instance kindness accomplished more good than winning a dozen victories.

Concerning the general status of New Mexico at the time of the conquest, and some reasons for the ease with which it was taken by the American Army, a few detailed facts may well be given. According to the census of 1844, this Territory had a mixed population of one hundred and sixty thousand, of which number about one-third were Pueblo Indians. These natives were the original owners of the soil and had submitted to the Spaniards during the earliest conquest of the region. They now, as a rule, professed the Roman Catholic belief, had their own churches and priests, and lived in forced submission to the Territorial laws.

Digitized by Google

They usually occupied villages or pueblos far isolated from other New Mexican settlements. Thus they enjoyed their own social laws and customs, and seldom intermarried among the Mexican overlords, whom they bitterly hated.

New Mexico was herself situated a long distance from the central Government, and owing to this fact she had for years been subjected to the devastating invasions of bordering Indian tribes, and distracted by the feuds and bickerings of a feeble home administration. Thus the fighting spirit of the country had died out, and in the end she could not have offered very effective resistance to any invader.

In an old diary, now a rare document, which was written by Major W. H. Emory, of Kearny's force, and entitled "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego in California, 1846-47," may be found the following vivid description of Santa Fé and New Mexican affairs as observed by an eyewitness. On August 30, 1846, Major Emory wrote:

To-day we went to church in great state. The governor's seat, a large, well-stuffed chair covered with crimson, was occupied by the commanding

Digitized by Google

officer. The church was crowded with an attentive audience of men and women, but not a word was uttered from the pulpit by the priest, who kept his back to the congregation the whole time, repeating prayers and incantations. The band, the identical one used at the fandango (dance), and strumming the same tunes, played without intermission. Except the governor's seat and one row of benches, there were no seats in the church. Each woman dropped on her knees on the bare floor as she entered, and only exchanged this position for a seat on the ground at long intervals, announced by the tinkle of a small bell.

The interior of the church was decorated with some fifty crosses, a great number of the most miserable paintings and wax figures, and looking-glasses trimmed with pieces of tinsel.

The priest, a very grave, respectable-looking person of fair complexion, commenced the service by sprinkling holy water over the congregation. When abreast a high official person he extended his silver water spout and gave him a handful.

When a favorite air was struck up the young women whom we recognized as having figured at the fandango counted their beads, tossed their heads, and crossed themselves to the tune of the music.

All appeared to have just left their work to come to church. There was no fine dressing nor personal display that will not be seen on week days. Indeed, on returning from church we found all the stores open, and the market women selling their melons and plums as usual.

The fruits of this place — muskmelon, apple, and

Digitized by Google

plum — are very indifferent, and would scarcely be eaten in the States. I must except, in condemning their fruit, the apricots and grapes, which grow in perfection.

On leaving the narrow valley of the Santa Fé, which varies from a thousand feet to a mile or two in width, the country presents nothing but barren hills, utterly incapable, either from soil or climate, of producing anything useful.

The houses are of mud bricks, in the Spanish style, generally of one story, and built on a square. The interior of the square is an open court and the principal rooms open into it. They are forbidding in appearance from the outside, but nothing can exceed the comfort and convenience of the interior. The thick walls make them cool in summer and warm in winter.

The better class of people are provided with excellent beds, but the lower class sleep on untanned skins. The women here, as in many parts of the world, appear to be much before the men in refinement, intelligence, and knowledge of useful arts. The higher class dress like the American women except that instead of the bonnet they wear a scarf over the head called a "reboso." This they wear asleep or awake, in the house or abroad. The dress of the lower class of women is a simple petticoat, with arms and shoulders bare, except what may chance to be covered by the "reboso."

The men who have the means to do so dress after our fashion, but by far the greater number, when they dress at all, wear leather breeches, tight around

Digitized by Google

the hips and open from the knee down; shirt and blanket take the place of our coat and vest.

The city is dependent on the distant hills for wood, and at all hours of the day may be seen jackasses passing laden with wood, which is sold at two bits [twenty-five cents] the load. These are the most diminutive animals, and usually mounted from behind, after the fashion of leap frog. The jackass is the only animal that can be subsisted in this barren neighborhood without great expense. Our horses are all sent to a distance of twelve, fifteen, and thirty miles for grass.

Grain was very high when we first entered the town, selling freely at five dollars and six dollars the fanegos [one hundred and forty pounds]. As our wagons draw near and the crops of wheat are being gathered, the price is falling gradually to four dollars the fanegos. Milk is six cents per pint; eggs, three cents apiece; sugar, thirty-five cents, and coffee seventy-five cents per pound. The sugar used in this country is principally made from the cornstalk.

A great reduction must take place now in the price of dry goods and groceries, twenty per cent at least, for this was about the rate of duty charged by Armijo, which is now, of course, taken off. His charge was five hundred dollars the wagonload, without regard to the contents of the wagons or the value of the goods, and hence the duty was very unjust and unequal.

Mr. Alvarez informed me that the importations from the United States varied much, but that they

Digitized by Google

would average about five hundred thousand dollars yearly and no more.

Continuing with prophetic clearness, Major Emory observes:

New Mexico, although its soil is barren and its resources limited, unless the gold mines should, as is probable, be more extensively developed hereafter and the culture of the grapes enlarged, is, from its position in a commercial and military aspect, an all-important military possession for the United States. The road from Santa Fé to Fort Leavenworth presents few obstacles for a railway, and, if it continues as good to the Pacific, will be one of the routes to be considered over which the United States will pass immense quantities of merchandise into what may become in time the rich and populous States of Sonora and Southern California.

Having formally occupied New Mexico, Kearny's first business was to secure his conquest by erecting Fort Marcy, which was named after the Hon. W. L. Marcy, Secretary of War. This fortification was erected on a hill northeast of Santa Fé and commanding the city. It was massively built of adobe bricks by volunteers, who were allowed eighteen cents per day extra wages for their services. The fort, when finished, stood in the form of a tri-decagon and was

Digitized by Google

large enough to accommodate one thousand soldiers. It was armed with fourteen cannon.

The next step was to establish a provisional government in accordance with his instructions from Washington, but before this could be accomplished Kearny learned that the Mexicans were gathering in large numbers at Albuquerque to renew hostilities.

Starting from Santa Fé on September 2 with a force of about eight hundred men, Kearny marched south through San Felipe, Algodones and Bernalillo, arriving at Albuquerque without opposition. As he drew near that city a salute of twenty guns from the roof of the parish church gave evidence that no hostilities need be expected. Receiving the submission of many citizens at this place, Kearny then marched on to Paralta and as far as Tome, and, having made a demonstration of American friendship in a region whose loyalty had hitherto been doubtful, he returned to Santa Fé.

Having thus occupied New Mexico, established a civil government and appointed the necessary officials, Kearny, on September 25, set out for California with three hundred dragoons in search of new conquests, following the Gila route.

Digitized by Google

He left Colonel Doniphan in charge of New Mexican affairs, and that officer was reinforced a few days later by Colonel Price and twelve hundred mounted Missouri volunteers, together with a Mormon battalion of five hundred men. An effective fighting force of about three thousand five hundred Americans thus remained. Concerning Doniphan's remarkable campaign, Price's occupation, and the subsequent events in New Mexico, this story has no connection. We are concerned only with Kearny's original campaign of conquest in the winning of the Southwest.

To return then to Kearny, marching down the valley of the Rio Grande, on October 6, at a point near Socorro, he met Kit Carson and a band of fifteen men en route from Los Angeles to Washington, bearing dispatches from Commodore Stockton. Learning from Carson that California had already been subdued by Stockton and Frémont, and that there was no further opposition to American rule, Kearny sent two hundred of his men, under Major Sumner, back to Santa Fé.

Assuming responsibility for the delivery of Carson's dispatches, Kearny then ordered the

Digitized by Google

scout to accompany him westward. This command, when finally ready to start, contained, besides General Kearny, his staff and servants, one hundred dragoons, with Antonio Robidoux and Kit Carson as guides — in all, one hundred and twenty-one men, mounted mostly on mules, with two mountain howitzers for artillery support.

After a hard march, in which many animals were lost, they reached the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers on November 22, when fresh horses were obtained. Fording the Colorado on November 25, they set out across the California desert, arriving at Warner's ranch, about sixty miles northeast of San Diego, on December 2. Here they were hospitably entertained by Warner's assistant, a man named Marshall. Two days later they reached Stokes' ranch, where they were kindly received by "Señor Bill," a well-known character. On December 5, at Santa Maria, they met Captain Gillespie, Lieutenant Beale, and a party of thirty-five men. It was here learned that a native uprising had occurred in Southern California and that a Mexican detachment was in close vicinity.

Digitized by Google

While Kearny's men were, of course, badly fatigued by their long journey, an attack was at once planned. Judging all Mexicans by those they had seen in New Mexico, the Americans naturally thought the Californians were likewise too cowardly to fight.

The battle of San Pascual was fought on December 6, 1846. It appears that Flores, the Mexican Governor of California, had sent a Captain Pico southward from Los Angeles to watch the movements of any invading force of Americans and, if possible, to cut off some detached command. On the day of the battle Pico had about eighty men, all splendidly mounted. Kearny had about one hundred and sixty tired men mounted on mules or broken-down horses, stiffened and worn out by their long journey. Many of his animals were unbroken to the saddle. In the fight, however, Kearny only brought about one hundred of his force into action, the remainder being reserved to guard the baggage.

The Mexicans were discovered near the Indian village of San Pascual in the early morning. The weather was cold, a drizzling rain was falling, and the soldiers were soaked to the skin.

With the first appearance of the enemy the

Digitized by Google

Americans charged. As was customary, the Mexicans fled, with the entire attacking force in pellmell pursuit, firing guns at random. The fugitives were armed with long lances. Quite naturally the poor old army mules could not overtake the fleet California horses, but the chase went merrily on in moving-picture style until the entire American command was strung out for the distance of a half mile.

Then the unexpected happened. Turning quickly in a compact body, the Mexicans countercharged their scattered opponents, whose guns were now empty or useless because of the rain. It was now clubbed guns and sabers against twelve-foot lances wielded by the most skillful horseback riders in the world. The Americans fought with the valor of desperation, but their weapons in this kind of a conflict were hopelessly outclassed. For about ten minutes the scrimmage went on, when, as the rear guard with the howitzers were approaching within range, the Californians galloped away. Such was San Pascual, the bloodiest battle among white men in California history. The Americans lost eighteen men killed, and nineteen wounded, including Kearny. Three of the wounded died later.

Digitized by Google

With but two exceptions all the injuries were caused by lance thrusts. The Mexican loss, though never definitely determined, probably did not exceed a dozen men wounded and one prisoner.

The Americans, to be sure, had held their ground, but it was a most dearly bought victory —if victory it could be called. They seem to have fought in hard luck in spite of their bravery. Even a mule attached to a howitzer became either excited with the chase or frightened and ran away. Dashing in among the retreating enemy, this mule and cannon were quickly captured and the unfortunate driver was killed. The survivors of the party spent the balance of the day dressing their injuries. That night the dead were buried at the foot of a willow tree near the battlefield. Later their remains were transferred to San Diego.

On the afternoon of December 7 "the most tattered and ill-fed detachment of men that ever the United States mustered under her colors" set out over the hills for San Diego. Going into camp at San Bernardo after a short skirmish, in which the enemy, as usual, retreated, they found themselves in sore straits.

Digitized by Google

To attempt to move with their wounded, while harassed by swift cavalry, was extremely dangerous. Food was scarce and they were already living on mule meat. Water could be obtained only by digging for it. On the night of the eighth, Kearny sent three men — Lieutenant Beale, Kit Carson, and an Indian — to San Diego for assistance. Three days later a force of two hundred marines arrived from Stockton's command and all immediate danger of attack ended. The combined forces then resumed the march. En route they camped at Alvarado's ranch, where an abundance of poultry and live stock was foraged for army supplies.

In spite of San Pascual and other petty successes, Governor Flores' preparations to resist the invasion of California were feeble and poorly timed. The Mexican leaders were too much given to jealous rivalry. The people of California were too fully aware of the weakness of their Government. Besides, only a very poor grade of gunpowder, manufactured at San Gabriel, could be secured by them. When the Americans were reported to be advancing from the north and east and preparing to attack from the south, the more intelligent of the native Mex-

Digitized by Google

icans became convinced that resistance was hopeless. Accordingly they began to lay schemes for securing pardons.

On December 29 the combined forces of Kearny and Stockton marched out of San Diego and captured Los Angeles, the capital, on January 10, 1847.

Kearny's greatest work had ended with the occupation of New Mexico. The chief honors in the conquest of California go to Frémont and Stockton.

This story will not discuss the triangular official controversy that ensued between these three men in the Winter of 1847, subsequent to the surrender of Los Angeles. It is sufficient to say that, on March 1, 1847, in pursuance with the aforementioned instructions from Washington, Kearny, as senior officer of the land forces, became civil governor of California. This office he held until the following June, when he was ordered to serve in Old Mexico. In March, 1848, he was appointed military and civil governor of Vera Cruz, a conquered city. During the following May he was given the same position in Mexico City, where he contracted a fever from which he never recovered. Returning to

Digitized by Google

the United States, he died in St. Louis, Missouri, on October 31, 1848, at the age of fifty-four.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on August 30, 1794, Kearny's whole adult life was spent as an army officer. He won high honors in the War of 1812, and was confined at Quebec a British prisoner for several months. After peace was made, in 1814, he was stationed at various military posts in regular service until he organized the Army of the West, in 1846.

In the winning of the Southwest Kearny's name ranks with the foremost. Not alone do his honors rest with the conquest of New Mexico; he pushed across an unknown desert and at once, with worse than forlorn encouragement, fought the battles of San Pascual and San Bernardo. Badly wounded and scarcely taking time to rest, he joined the naval forces of the Pacific Coast, and aided in the final conquest of California. The development of our nation has been achieved by this sort of gallantry.

Digitized by Google

VI

GEORGE A. CUSTER

IN the Summer of 1868 the Indians of the prairie Southwest began hostilities against the whites. Eluding the Government forces in the Arkansas River district and directing their attacks mainly upon exposed settlements, they began a series of atrocities that for fiendish brutality are scarcely paralleled in history.

From August, 1868, to July, 1869, there were officially reported to the military authorities of the Department of Missouri no fewer than one hundred and fifty-four persons murdered, sixteen wounded, forty-one scalped, three scouts murdered, fourteen outrages against white women, twenty-nine men, women, and children captured, sixteen hundred and twenty-seven head of live stock stolen, twenty-four houses plundered and burned, eleven stage coaches attacked, and four wagon trains destroyed.

The majority of these crimes were committed in Eastern Colorado, Western and North Central Kansas, Western and Northern Texas. This

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

George A. Custer

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

violence was at its worst between the months of August and November, 1868, though lawlessness continued in a desultory manner down until the middle of 1869.

These figures, it must be borne in mind, take into account only such cases as were officially reported. They are not concerned with losses incident to military operations.

History never will record all the terrible sacrifices, the heartaches, and the sufferings of the brave pioneers who led the vanguard of civilization westward. The melancholy plains and lonely buttes have silently witnessed scenes of suffering and deeds of heroism which written pages never will reveal.

Things were in a bad way in 1868. The War Department and the Department of the Interior in charge of Indian affairs evidently did not coöperate to the fullest extent. Indian agents too often were appointed without regard to proficiency or adaptability — men whose earlier environments rendered them totally unfit to comprehend frontier problems.

The Indians of the plains were proverbially deceitful and treacherous. While covertly committing their worst crimes, they were in many

Digitized by Google

cases reported by unsuspecting agents as being quiet and friendly.

Modern firearms and large quantities of ammunition were doled out to dangerous tribes on the strength of palavering promises to remain on reservations and hunt game. These same weapons were used very effectively in slaughtering defenseless settlers. They also were found useful in fighting the white soldiers of the "Great Father," the latter often being more poorly armed than were their red-skinned opponents. All of which strikes the modern observer as interesting "statesmanship."

In passing, it might be well to note the lenient treatment that has been accorded so frequently to notorious Indian chiefs — Satanta, Sitting Bull, Rain in the Face, Geronimo, and others. Self-confessed murderers, whose hands were stained with the blood of innocent women and children, these men received light prison sentences, whereas a common horse thief might have been hanged at sight. It was a strange contradiction of justice which was due mainly to a perverted and sickly public sentiment in the East and Middle West.

To substantiate fully the charge that in 1868

Digitized by Google

there was a lack of harmony between the department in care of Indian affairs and the military authorities, the following extracts are quoted from official correspondence now on file with the Government records of that period:

FORT LARNED, KAN., August 10, 1868.

Sir: — I have the honor to inform you that I yesterday made the whole issue of annuity, goods, arms, and ammunition to the Cheyenne chiefs [the Arapahoes and Apaches had received their portions a few days earlier] and people of their nation. They were delighted at receiving the goods, particularly the arms and ammunition, and never before have I known them to be better satisfied and express themselves as being so well contented, previous to this issue. . . . I made them a long speech. . . . They have now left for their hunting grounds, and I am perfectly satisfied that there will be no trouble with them this season and consequently with no Indians of my agency. Your obedient servant,

E. W. WYNKOOP,
U. S. Indian Agent.

The records show further that, on this occasion, Agent Wynkoop delivered to a single tribe, the Arapahoes, one hundred pistols, eighty Lancaster rifles, twelve kegs of powder, one and one-half kegs of lead, and also fifteen thousand percussion caps.

Digitized by Google

Commenting upon this situation, the following is quoted from one of General Sherman's letters to General Hancock, dated St. Louis, Missouri, January 26, 1867 — over a year before the incident just cited took place. Sherman said: "If the Indian agents may, without limit, supply the Indians with arms, I would not expose our troops and trains to them at all, but would withdraw our soldiers, who already have a herculean task on their hands."

But a crisis had to come. In addition to the outrages already enumerated, the War Department had suffered the massacre and mutilation of Lieutenant Kidder and his little band of eleven men, and the slaughter of Captain Fetterman and his party of ninety-three soldiers and civilians. Decisive action thus was made necessary and imperative. To this end the following dispatch is of interest, written as it was while the notorious raids first mentioned were in progress:

Headquarters, Military Division of Missouri,
ST LOUIS, Mo., September 19, 1868.

I now regard the Cheyennes and Arapahoes at war and that it will be impossible to discriminate between the well-disposed and the warlike parts of the band, unless an absolute separation be made. I prefer that the agents collect all the former and

Digitized by Google

conduct them to their reservations within the Indian Territory south of Kansas. . . . So long as Agent Wynkoop remains at Fort Larned, the vagabond part of these tribes will cluster about him for support. . . . The vital part of these tribes are committing murders and robberies from Kansas to Colorado, and it is an excess of generosity on our part to be feeding and supplying the old, young and feeble, while the young men are at war.

W. T. SHERMAN,
Lieutenant-General Commanding.

With a view to solving these Indian troubles, the famous winter campaign of 1868-1869, under the official direction of General Phil Sheridan, with General George A. Custer in charge of active operations, was inaugurated against the five well-known and warlike prairie tribes of Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches. The object of waging a winter campaign against the Indians was distinctly a piece of military strategy. Repeated experiences had shown that Indian fighting, when attempted during the summer months, gave them a decided advantage. Not only were they absolutely familiar with the country, but their predatory, running tactics were too greatly assisted by the abundance of pasturage and game with which the plains were stocked during the open months.

Digitized by Google

Fighting under these conditions was simply to give the Indians the first choice of a military base. During the winter, the plains Indians necessarily were encamped in villages, sheltered by the timbered valleys of streams. At that season their ponies were thin, due to a scarcity of forage, which condition, together with the frequent cold weather of the prairie, made the shifting of the Indian population very hazardous. Hence they were reluctant to move about and would be compelled to fight on the defensive at such times and places as the white man saw fit. It was precisely under these circumstances that the famous battle of the Washita was fought and won by General Custer, on November 27, 1868.

George Armstrong Custer, the hero of this story, was born at New Rumley, Ohio, on December 5, 1839. Graduating from West Point in 1861, during the Civil War, he was at once assigned to the Fifth United States Cavalry, and he arrived at the front on the day of the first battle of Bull Run. During the early part of the war he served as aide on the staffs of Generals Phil Kearny, William H. Smith, and George B. McClellan. He was soon promoted to be captain of volunteers and served with great honor

Digitized by Google

in the Peninsular Campaign of 1862. In June, 1863, he was made a brigadier-general of volunteers and placed over a brigade of Michigan cavalry, which became one of the best cavalry troops of the war.

Custer won distinguished honors at Gettysburg in July, 1863, and he served with great distinction under General Sheridan in the Virginia Campaign of 1864. He was brevetted major-general of volunteers on October 19, 1864, and made a brilliant record throughout the closing campaign of the war.

After the civil conflict Custer served in Texas during the Winter of 1865-1866. He was invited by Mexico to take command of the cavalry which Juarez had organized to drive Maximilian out of that country. Custer sought permission of the War Department to accept this unusual opportunity, but his request was denied. He then accepted a commission as lieutenant-colonel of the Seventh United States Cavalry and began his career as an Indian fighter, the campaign narrated in this story being his first important achievement on the plains.

The Seventh Cavalry was a new organization, having been formed in July, 1866. While this

Digitized by Google

troop was to operate in a body during the projected Indian operations, it had never recruited to more than half its full strength. To remedy this seeming lack of coherence, thorough drilling was at once established and a large number of fresh horses were secured and disciplined.

As a further incentive toward efficiency, a picked force of forty sharpshooters was selected, after a long series of competitive contests. This body of riflemen, when increased by the usual complement of non-commissioned officers, formed a nucleus around which a most formidable fighting machine might well be expected. Colonel Cook, a daring young officer, already experienced in the War of the Rebellion as well as in Indian conflicts, was placed in command of this division.

As a means of further perfecting the regimental organization, the horses were assembled and then redistributed according to color, each of the troops thus being recognized easily by the respective mounts.

To insure an efficient corps of scouts, Custer secured from the reservation of friendly Osages, in Southwestern Kansas, the services of a chief, Little Beaver, a well-known Indian "wise man" or counselor named Hard Rope, eleven warriors,

Digitized by Google

and an interpreter. No persons but Indians themselves have ever so thoroughly mastered the plains — the art of following trails, scouting, and detecting the presence of enemies. Successful campaigns against Indians have almost invariably been assisted by friendly Indian allies. In choosing these scouts, Custer was careful to keep in mind that the Osages and Kaws had suffered many bitter attacks from the wild tribes in question, and that a natural race hatred, prompted by a desire for vengeance, was sure to increase their military efficiency.

Early in November, 1868, orders were received from General Sheridan, then at Fort Hays, to push the work of preparation. As the hostile tribes were known to be far southward, it was deemed inadvisable to maintain a base of supplies at Fort Dodge, on the Arkansas. A better plan of establishing a new base about one hundred miles south of Dodge and within striking distance of the enemy's country was adopted. Accordingly a train of about four hundred wagons was started from Fort Dodge on November 12. The train was guarded by several hundred infantry, who were also to act as the garrison of the new post. At Mulberry Creek

Digitized by Google

this force was joined by the cavalry, at which time General Sully, district commander, took entire charge of the command.

On the morning of the second day the wagons were formed into four equal columns and the march southward was definitely begun. To guard against attack the cavalry was divided into detachments, which were distributed in advance and along the flanks of the train, while the infantrymen were distributed among the wagons, where their fighting strength could best be utilized. After this fashion the force moved on uneventfully for six days and went into camp —then called Camp Supply, now Fort Supply—near the junction of Wolf and Beaver Creeks. Fort Supply then became the headquarters. It is located about one hundred miles south of Dodge City, Kansas, near the present center of Woodward County, Oklahoma, and about twenty miles from the town of Woodward.

Here the troops were reinforced by General Sheridan and his staff, while General Sully and his men, together with Captain Keogh, of the Seventh Cavalry, were sent back to the district headquarters at Fort Harker.

On November 22 orders of a very general

Digitized by Google

sort came from the War Department. In substance these orders directed Custer and his men to move out and search for the Indians in their winter homes. If found, they were to receive such retribution for past wrongdoing as he could inflict upon them. Preparations for the start at once were made. That evening a heavy fall of snow set in, and at bugle call the following morning the storm still raged.

Undaunted by the weather the troopers saddled and made ready, and at seven o'clock on the morning of November 23 the Seventh Cavalry swung out of Camp Supply in the teeth of a blizzard. Here was a regiment of men under a fearless leader, starting out in a blinding snowstorm to search a strange country for a cunning and cruel foe. Courage and manhood were never to be more splendidly exhibited than by Custer and his command on this expedition.

After marching about fifteen miles, as the storm had not abated they went into camp near Wolf Creek. Here an abundance of water and timber was found, and the men passed the night in comparative comfort. On the following morning at four o'clock they again were in motion. The snow had ceased falling, but it cov-

Digitized by Google

ered the ground to a depth of eighteen inches, thus greatly impeding progress, especially for the wagons. The second day passed uneventfully. It finally was determined to follow the valley of Wolf Creek and strike the Canadian River near the Antelope Hills (now Day County, Oklahoma). This well-known landmark comprises a group of sandstone hills standing in the bend of the Canadian, on the south bank, near the present Texas boundary. There a favorable reconnoissance might be made. With a view to reaching this point, the command thus followed Wolf Creek in a south and westerly course for three uneventful days. On the morning of the fourth day the scouts led the force nearly due south, and at nightfall the north bank of the Canadian was reached.

It was commonly believed that the hostile Indians were at no great distance beyond. To prevent their escape and to make a thorough reconnoissance, Major Elliot as directed by Custer to equip three troops of cavalry and several scouts in light marching order, with one day's provisions, and move up the north bank of the river about fifteen miles. Any traces of Indians were to be at once followed, and, in case of an

Digitized by Google

engagement, the scouts were to notify the main command at once. Meanwhile the wagon train had with difficulty forded the treacherous river, a danger intensified by floating ice. It was Custer's plan, in case no word came from Elliot, to march around the Antelope Hills and then directly south toward the headwaters of the Washita River, in which vicinity the two forces would reunite, but scarcely had the wagon train been lined up for the advance when startling news came. A scout arrived from Major Elliot's division with the report that the fresh trail of a war party had been discovered and that he, Elliot, was hotly pursuing in a southeasterly direction. Custer at once dispatched word to Elliot that he would move south and meet him. If the Indians changed their course, Custer was to be notified. If not overtaken before eight o'clock that evening, Elliot was to go into camp and await the arrival of the main command.

General Custer at once decided to advance, leaving his wagons under the guard of an officer and eighty men, who were to follow as rapidly as possible. His instructions were brief. Each trooper was to take on one hundred rounds of ammunition, together with a small quantity of

Digitized by Google

coffee and bread and a little forage for his horse. No tents or extra blankets were carried, and, thus lightly equipped, Custer and his men dashed out of camp. The weather had moderated sufficiently to soften the snow, and good progress could now be made. The force hurried directly south and marched all day without rest, for the purpose of joining Elliot's command, yet so rapidly had the latter moved that it was nine o'clock in the evening before they were overtaken. The combined forces then took a short rest and refreshments under cover of a timbered valley. There was no longer a doubt that the Indian village was near. Haste and silence were imperative. After a delay of but one hour the entire command advanced. No bugle calls were allowed; all talking aloud was forbidden.

Two Osage scouts were sent on foot about three hundred yards ahead. Following them in single file rode Custer and the remainder of his scouts, while the main body of the troopers followed at a distance of six hundred yards.

Several hours thus passed in suppressed excitement.

Suddenly the Indian scouts in advance halted, and Custer, hastily arriving, was informed that

Digitized by Google

the dead embers of a fire had been found. Nearby was a stretch of heavy timber and hostile Indians were now unquestionably near. Moving a short distance onward, the Osage scouts detected the presence of a large Indian village. It was during the dead of night, and, although the moon shone brightly, there was no reason to believe that Custer's party had yet been discovered. Only the occasional bark of a dog or the snort of a pony broke the stillness.

Quickly assembling his officers, General Custer led them to the brow of a hill overlooking the encampment, in order to familiarize them with the situation. Orders were then given. As it was after midnight, the remaining time before daybreak was to be spent in surrounding the village. A general attack would be made at dawn.

The entire command of eight hundred men was split into four divisions, and two of these bodies were at once sent in a circuitous route of several miles to reach their desired positions. Shortly afterward the third division moved into place. According to the plan of battle, Colonel Myers, with two troops, was to occupy the right, and Major Elliot, with three troops, coöperating

Digitized by Google

with the two troops under Colonel Thompson, was to hold the left and rear. General Custer, with his scouts and four troops, together with Colonel Cook and his forty sharpshooters, were to attack the Indians in front.

After these careful preparations had been made, there still remained about three hours of darkness. As no fires were allowed and the men were forbidden even to stamp their feet, great suffering ensued from the intense cold of early morning. Here and there could be seen groups of horses and men huddled together, anxiously awaiting the morrow and the fate it had in store for them.

That the Indians were assembled in large force and would greatly outnumber the whites there could be little doubt.

Slowly the night wore away. The moon went down and the world was left in inky blackness.

With the first peep of day the advance began. Orders were given not to start firing until a general signal was given. Slowly the men moved forward. The Indian lodges appeared in full view through the timber. The moment had arrived, but, ere Custer could order an attack, a rifle shot rang out from the opposite side of the

Digitized by Google

valley. The regimental band at once struck up Custer's favorite air, "Garry Owen," and with a great cheer the attack began, exactly as planned, from all sides at once.

The Indians had been caught unawares, but they quickly recovered from their surprise. Catching up their weapons they sought shelter behind trees and the river bank, and began a desperate resistance. The village was taken almost immediately and a fight to the finish was started at once in the timber. The battle was desperate. Major Benteen narrowly escaped death at the hands of a young Indian boy armed with a revolver and whom the officer was obliged to kill in self-defense.

Early in the conflict a number of Indians broke away in flight. Major Elliot and nineteen men pursued them — but never returned. Their fate will be described later.

Seventeen braves armed with rifles entrenched themselves behind a low earthwork, from which vantage they worked serious harm among the troopers until they all were picked off by the sharpshooters.

Everywhere the fighting was furious.

By midday practically all resistance had ended.

Digitized by Google

The squaws and children had been assembled for safety, and the warriors' ponies, several hundred in number, had been successfully rounded up, when, greatly to Custer's surprise, a large war party of Indians, probably a thousand in number, appeared at some distance on the plain. Custer hastily formed his men — who luckily had just received a fresh supply of ammunition from the wagon train — and waited the action of this new enemy, whose force already outnumbered his and was continually increasing. His losses had been heavy. Captain Hamilton had been shot dead in the first charge, Colonel Barnitz was critically wounded, Major Elliot and nineteen men were missing. Two minor officers were badly injured, and many of the volunteers were dead or dying.

Inquiring of one of the captive squaws, by means of an interpreter, Custer learned that he had attacked a Cheyenne village in command of Chief Black Kettle, which was but one of a series of tribal towns extending ten miles up the valley. The Comanches, Kiowas, Arapahoes, two parties of Cheyennes, and a number of Apaches — in fact, about all the hostile Indians of the Southwest — were in winter camp where he had made his bold onslaught. Having disposed of one vil-

Digitized by Google

lage, he was thus at once assailed by the warriors of the remaining tribes, but, true to Indian custom, the attacking bands, though in large numbers, were extremely cautious, fighting in the open, and they were beaten back.

Feeling that it was now a proper time to use intimidation, Custer destroyed the lodges of the captured village in full view of the enemy.

According to his own figures, he had secured by actual count eight hundred and seventy-five ponies. What to do with these animals was at first a problem. He had no use for them. To leave them undisturbed was merely to encourage the remaining Indians to escape and perhaps to follow his own men to destruction ere they could reach Camp Supply. Allowing his prisoners — some sixty in number — to select such of the mounts as they might need, Custer ordered the balance of the ponies killed. Inhuman this may seem, but the simple fact that war is hell has never yet been disproved. According to the rules of the game of war, one of the surest means of success is to incapacitate your adversary. Custer was merely following the prescribed rules of the game, and the logic of history has justified his policy.

Digitized by Google

Overawed and discomfited by such tactics, the remaining warriors, now numbering thousands, fled before Custer's advance, evidently expecting the same treatment. Pushing on, he found their village deserted. The battle of the Washita had been won by eight hundred cavalry opposed by several thousand fully equipped Indian warriors — a splendid example of daring leadership supported by brilliant soldiery.

In summarizing the victory, the official report of General Sheridan is herewith presented:

Headquarters, Department of the Missouri, in the Field. Depot on the North Canadian at the Junction of Beaver Creek, Indian Territory. General Field Order No. 6, November 29, 1868.

The major-general commanding announces to this command the defeat by the Seventh Regiment of Cavalry of a large force of Cheyenne Indians under the celebrated chief, Black Kettle, reinforced by the Arapahoes under Little Raven and the Kiowas under Satanta, on the morning of the 27th inst., on the Washita River near the Antelope Hills, Indian Territory, resulting in a loss to the savages of 103 warriors killed, including Black Kettle, the capture of 53 squaws and children, 875 ponies, 1,123 buffalo robes and skins, 535 pounds of powder, 1,050 pounds of lead, 4,000 arrows, 700 pounds of tobacco, besides rifles, pistols, saddles, bows, lariats and immense quantities of dried meat and

Digitized by Google

other winter provisions, the complete destruction of their village, and almost total annihilation of this Indian band.

The loss to the Seventh Cavalry was two officers killed — Major Joel H. Elliot and Captain Louis McL. Hamilton — and nineteen enlisted men; three officers wounded — Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Albert Barnitz (badly), Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Custer [a brother of General Custer], and Second Lieutenant T. Z. Marsh (slightly) — and eleven enlisted men.

The energy and rapidity shown during one of the worst snowstorms that has visited this section of the country, with the temperature below freezing point, and the gallantry and bravery displayed, resulting in such signal success, reflect the highest credit upon both officers and men of the Seventh Cavalry, and the major-general commanding, while regretting the loss of such gallant officers as Major Elliot and Captain Hamilton, who fell while gallantly leading their men, desires to express his thanks to the officers and men engaged in the battle of the Washita, and his special congratulations are tendered to their distinguished commander, Brevet Major-General George A. Custer, for the efficient and gallant services rendered, which have characterized the opening of the campaign against hostile Indians south of the Arkansas.

By command of
Major-General P. H. Sheridan.

In December, a fortnight after the battle, a searching party led by Custer found the bodies

Digitized by Google

of Major Elliot and his nineteen brave comrades about two miles from the scene of the main conflict. In their eagerness to pursue a band of fleeing Indians they had imprudently gone beyond the protection of the main command. Surrounded by an overwhelming force they all had been massacred, and when found, their bodies, terribly mutilated, were frozen stiff. Such are the penalties of war, and this and many similar stories of the plains go merely to describe the awful price we have paid in winning the great Southwest.

The Cheyenne women and children captured by Custer were taken to Fort Hays and retained as prisoners of war — as hostages subject to the conduct of the remainder of their tribe. Subsequently, on the peaceable submission of the Cheyennes, they were released and kindly escorted to Camp Supply, where they were received by their people.

The battle of the Washita was decisive. It broke the formidable power of the Southwestern Indians and reacted for the good of American civilization.

While this region was for several years the scene of occasional violence, henceforth the set-

Digitized by Google

tlers could, and did, enter the country, and railroads could be, and were, built with tolerable safety. The progress of Americanism was not long to be resisted by Spanish Mexico, nor by the powerful native tribes of the prairies.

Of General Custer's great work in the Southwest; of the manner in which his diplomacy and soldierly qualities finally induced the Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, cowed by defeat, to settle in peace upon their reservations; of the chivalrous and noble manner in which he rescued numbers of white women from the horrors of Indian captivity, space forbids discussing here.

The remarkable record established by Custer in the Civil War forms a distinct chapter of our military history. His career subsequent to the winter Campaign in 1869 — his work in the Black Hills of Dakota, the beautiful story of his married life, saddened forever by the bloody tragedy of the Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876 — all these are events that belong most properly in a separate narrative.

The fitting manner in which the citizens of Michigan, in Custer's old home town of Monroe, recently dedicated to him a handsome statue, at which ceremony the Chief Executive of the nation

Digitized by Google

and the highest officials of a great state assembled to honor a fallen hero and offer consolation to a grief-stricken widow — these are familiar facts.

The Northwest has honored Custer by consecrating the spot where he fell. The North has honored him in bronze and granite. And the Southwest, which he so gallantly helped to win, reveres the memory of this brave soldier, whose manly career has made American citizenship better, and whose life was sacrificed to the frontier.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

John C. Fremont

Digitized by Google

CHICAGO
PUBLIC

Digitized by Google

VII

JOHN C. FREMONT

JOHN C. FREMONT is perhaps the most brilliant figure in the history of the West. In the conquest of California he was by far the most conspicuous hero. Because of his numerous explorations he acquired the title of "the great pathfinder." Then, to sum up a romantic and adventurous career, he became a first-class politician and statesman, went to Congress, and, in 1856, was a presidential candidate, the first "standard-bearer" of the Republican party in a losing contest against the Democrat, James Buchanan. Later, in the service of the Federal Army, he became one of the Civil War heroes, and he lived a long life of distinction and usefulness.

To be sure, Frémont had good luck and an extraordinary "pull," as he was a son-in-law of T. H. Benton, United States Senator from Missouri and a mighty politician. This, of course, guaranteed to him the unlimited backing of the Government, and he was thus assured a high

Digitized by Google

reputation from the outset. As an explorer, he had the services of Kit Carson, the greatest of all scouts, who knew the entire West like a book before Frémont's "explorations" were conceived. Yet, in spite of these encouragements, Frémont was an extraordinary man, of rare ability, who probably would have succeeded under any circumstances. Nobody can question the importance of what he accomplished, and the scientific world, the American nation, and California in particular, all owe him a debt of everlasting gratitude.

Frémont rightfully inherited his restless, roving habits, and the dashing qualities which he possessed; for he was born of a French father and an American mother, on January 21, 1813. The father claimed Charleston, South Carolina, as a residence, but he was a rather itinerant person and spent much of his life traveling among the Indians. Occasionally his family would accompany him, and it was on one of these tours that John Charles Frémont was born. The mother was a native of Virginia, of distinguished ancestry, and, by descent, a near relative of George Washington. All writers declare that she was a woman of great personal charm and sterling

Digitized by Google

worth, characteristics which were certainly transmitted to her famous son.

As the lives of great men come and go, there is nothing unusual to relate concerning the boyhood of young Frémont. The father died in 1818, the mother in 1847. For a time John Charles remained at Dinwiddie Courthouse, Virginia. When he was thirteen years of age his mother removed with him to Charleston, South Carolina, where he read some law and continued his schooling. He showed great proficiency in mathematics. Like many others he attended college, and, like many great men, he engaged in the railroad business, working on a survey for a new line between Charleston and Hamburg. Later he served for a time in the navy, but President Jackson soon appointed him a civil engineer with the topographical corps, and he again took up railroad work, surveying the route of the Charleston and Cincinnati line. In 1838 he was appointed a second lieutenant with the United States topographical engineers.

About this time Congress decided that a thorough exploration and survey of the region north of the Missouri and west of the Mississippi Rivers was necessary. As a matter of fact, in

Digitized by Google

1838 the Government knew but little of the West. The present flourishing states of Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma were then thought to be, and were commonly called, the "Great American Desert," which region was traversed with peril by the old trail to Santa Fé, New Mexico, with which locality we were slightly familiar. The Rocky Mountains were a source of mystery save to a number of frontiersmen, hunters, and trappers of the Kit Carson type. A large portion of the Pacific Coast was openly held by foreign powers or in dispute as to ownership, and for these reasons, together with its remoteness, we knew but little of that country. On behalf of the Federal Government Frémont penetrated this vast wilderness, and with trusty guides explored it, gave it official identity and thereby stimulated a desire for colonization and permanent occupancy on the part of the American people — which influence still goes on. This achievement, together with the part he played in the conquest of California, constitutes Frémont's chief right to fame.

In the years 1838 and 1839 he accompanied a Mr. Nicollet on an exploring trip to the headwaters of the Mississippi. A little later, like

Digitized by Google

many other young men, he fell in love. Miss Jessie Benton, daughter of the aforementioned Missouri Senator, was the object of his affection. After a stormy courtship, Frémont married Miss Benton in Washington on October 19, 1841. It seems that at first the elder Benton did not think Frémont had the rank or the prospects which he thought his daughter deserved. But the "young folks" got married just the same, and in a short time the irate father-in-law's wrath passed away. In fact, Benton became a firm and lifelong friend to young Frémont, who soon proved himself an illustrious son-in-law and worthy of all the political influence which the Senator could and did bestow upon him.

In all, Frémont made five exploring tours into the West. The first three were conducted in the official interests of the Government; the last two were private enterprises. The first expedition occupied the Summer of 1842, and covered the country lying between the Missouri River and the Rockies, along the line of the Kansas and Great Platte Rivers. Starting from Choteau's Landing, near the present site of Kansas City, the party followed the south bank of the Kaw about one hundred miles, and then traveled

Digitized by Google

overland across the plains to Fort Laramie, through South Pass, discovering the high peak which still bears Frémont's name. After many thrilling adventures, they returned to St. Louis by way of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. It was while starting on this trip that Frémont made the acquaintance of Kit Carson on a steamer above St. Louis. From this acquaintance grew up a friendship that had great influence upon the careers of both men.

In the Spring of 1843 Frémont began his second expedition, under orders to connect his explorations of the preceding year with the surveys of Commodore Wilkes on the Pacific Coast, thus giving a continuous view of the great interior of the continent. Again, starting from near Kansas City, this party followed the Kaw to the mouth of the Republican Fork. Thence they traveled across country to St. Vrain's Fort, and thence to Great Salt Lake, and finally, by way of the Columbia River, to Fort Vancouver. Returning, Frémont led his men southward along the valley of the Fall River and the eastern base of the Cascade Range to Klamath Lake; thence south to Sutter's Fort, in the Sacramento Valley, and at last eastward, through the Great Basin,

Digitized by Google

past Salt Lake and across the plains to the Missouri River; thence by boat to St. Louis, which was reached on August 6, 1844. A few months later, on January 29, 1845, in recognition of his services, President Tyler conferred upon Lieutenant Frémont a brevet commission of captain in the corps of United States topographical engineers.

In passing, it should be stated that the chief sources of information concerning Frémont's expeditions are taken from his own reports, as published by Congress, his first and second reports appearing by authority of a Senate order, passed on March 3, 1845. These accounts at once gave him a wide reputation as a scientific explorer. Frémont's treatises on California plant life were recognized by the Smithsonian Institution, and they were the further means of spreading his name throughout Europe.

In the fall of 1845 Frémont started on his third western journey, the last under the auspices of the Government, and with which this story mainly is concerned. No similar expedition in American history has held such romantic interest and has had such far-reaching results as this. The route was by the northern headwaters of the

Digitized by Google

Arkansas, to the south edge of Great Salt Lake, thence directly across the Central Basin toward California, following the course taken on the preceding trip. //Arriving at the foot of the Sierras, Frémont divided his party, sending the main portion southward, while he, with fifteen men, scaled the mountains, crossing the ridge in six hours, and, hurrying to Sutter's Fort, he purchased fifty head of cattle for a food supply. He was then unable to locate his detached command, but, pushing on into the interior of California, he found they had crossed the mountains and had arrived safely, under the leadership of a Joseph Walker. Frémont then ordered Walker and his party to proceed to San José and await further orders, while he at once went to Monterey alone, where, in order to avoid Mexican suspicion, he conferred with Manuel Castro, the prefecto, and Carlos Castro, the commanding general, who were the leading authorities of the country. To these officials Frémont declared that his sole purpose was a scientific exploration of the continent, and that he had no United States soldiers with him. He asserted further that he wanted to ascertain the best means of developing commerce between the East and the

Digitized by Google

West, and at the same time he requested permission to winter in California, in order to recruit his company and continue explorations. His request was granted by the Mexican authorities. He then returned to his party at San José, where he remained several weeks.

In the meantime Castro received orders from his Government either to drive Frémont from the country or capture him and send him a prisoner to Mexico. On being informed by the American consul at Monterey that he was in danger, Frémont, instead of retreating, quickly occupied Hawk's Peak with his men, erected fortifications, and awaited attack. But the Mexicans did not attack. To be sure, they appeared in considerable numbers, but they confined their hostilities to marching pompously back and forth before Frémont's improvised fort. Accustomed as they were to fighting battles by paper proclamations, they proposed to take no chances by getting within range of the American rifles. After a number of days, since no attack had been made, and disregarding the clamor of his men to attack Castro, Frémont marched down the San Joaquin Valley and turned northward. He probably realized that his position thus far was of doubtful

Digitized by Google

legality. The episode at Hawk's Peak was characterized in the United States Senate by Mr. Benton in these words: "Such was the reason for raising the flag, and it was taken down when danger disappeared. It was well and nobly done, and worthy of our admiration. Sixty of our countrymen, three thousand miles from home, in sight of the Pacific Ocean, appealing to the flag of their country, unfurling it on the mountain top, and determined to die under it before they would submit to unjust aggression." Not a bad speech for a senator to make concerning his son-in-law.

This whole affair has, of course, been the target for volleys of opinions on the part of many writers. Some would have us believe that Frémont entered California in direct collusion with the Federal Government; that he really was there to defy Mexican authority, and to conquer the country at the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, it can be contended that he acted only from a natural impulse in defying General Castro, for any man would resent unjust arrest, and Frémont's French-American blood merely asserted itself.

At any rate, he traveled northward as far as

Digitized by Google

Klamath Lake, where a bloody encounter took place with the Indians. At this place he was met later by Lieutenant Gillespie, with Government dispatches transmitted orally, as the authorities at Washington considered it too hazardous to risk important State messages over so dangerous a journey. As closely as can be determined, Frémont was informed that a rupture between the United States and Mexico was not improbable, and it would be his duty to watch the situation in California, and conciliate the feelings of the people. He was also to encourage open friendship for the United States, and, above all, to do what he could to prevent California from falling into the hands of Great Britain.

Frémont at once retraced his steps southward, incidentally saving Carson's life in an Indian fight while en route. He found all California in a hubbub of excitement. According to current writers, General Castro was trying to arouse the antipathy of the natives against foreigners, Americans in particular, and he had issued a proclamation requiring the latter to leave the country. These same writers also appear to think that the Californians were planning to drive out the American residents, seize their

Digitized by Google

lands, and transfer the entire country to the control and protection of Great Britain. In order to achieve this even the Indians were to participate in the conspiracy by destroying the crops and homes of the hated invaders. These reports, like all war scares, were, of course, badly exaggerated. They placed altogether too much credence in the avenging power of a flimsy Revolutionary Government. Yet such rumors caused many to flock to Frémont's standard — which might have been their real purpose.

Another scare that was reported to Frémont in 1846, and which thrilled many Americans, has since been exposed. It was a story to the effect that a Catholic priest, named Eugene McNamara, was planning to establish an Irish-Catholic nation in California. This priest had resided for some time, in 1845 and early in 1846, at the British legation in Mexico City. He is then said to have applied to the Mexican Government for a land grant, for the purpose of establishing a colony in California. He proposed to give a square league (4,428 acres, as reported) to each family, and half a square league to each child of a colonist. His tract was to comprise three thousand square leagues, and included the entire San

Digitized by Google

Joaquin Valley. He proposed to start his colony with one thousand families, and he is alleged to have declared his purpose to the Mexican Government as being threefold: First, to advance the cause of Catholicism; second, to contribute to the happiness of his countrymen; and, third, to put an obstacle forever in the way of further usurpations on the part of an irreligious and anti-Catholic nation.

The value of the lands in question was fixed by law at about $71,000,000, and, when so large a money consideration loomed up, the project seems to have fallen through, for McNamara suddenly left the country, sailing for Honolulu, en route to Mexico. It is now a quite clearly established fact that a number of English speculators, seeing that California lands were sure to advance in value, desired to obtain as large a tract as possible, and, in order to get around the obstructions which the officials in a Catholic country like Mexico might offer, these speculators had employed an unscrupulous, or perhaps a fake priest, to negotiate for them under the guise of an Irish-Catholic colony. The scheme caused but little enthusiasm in Mexico, and it failed utterly. Its only important phase bearing upon Frémont's

Digitized by Google

career comes from the fact that many Americans believed McNamara's project to be a subterfuge on the part of the British Government to secure California, and that it failed only because no price ever was paid for the land, and hence no title of possession was ever recognized. Yet, as one historian grimly observes, "Who can imagine that the British would ever encourage several thousand Irishmen to locate in and colonize any country as a means thereby of securing a peaceful possession of it?"

Frémont's friends and biographers have, of course, had much to say about the McNamara plot, and have tried to make it justify the Bear Flag Revolt. They have further attempted to increase their hero's fame by alleging that Frémont's prompt action destroyed all chances of the plot's success, that he prevented Great Britain from securing California, and that he therefore won the country for the United States, at the same time averting a great war.

To return again to Frémont's operations: In addition to the scares already enumerated, an Indian uprising occurred, and six hundred hostile warriors encamped at Redding's Ranch. Without a doubt Frémont had to act decisively, and

Digitized by Google

extend protection to all Americans, or leave California to its fate. Disclaiming any official relation with the United States in warring upon the subjects of a nation with whom his country was nominally at peace, he reënlisted his men as volunteers in defense of American settlers and their families—an act characteristic of Frémont's leadership, though bound to result in complications. Instantly attacking the Indians, he dispersed them, destroyed five of their villages in one day, and completely broke their resistance, without losing a man.

Returning to his camp at Buttes, he learned that Castro had collected a force of four hundred men at Santa Clara and had sent a detachment to Sonoma to secure extra horses. Frémont at once sent a small band, under the leadership of Ezekial Merritt, who intercepted this force, capturing the entire command. Castro's forces soon were expelled from the vicinity. General Vallejo, two colonels, and a number of soldiers were taken prisoners. De la Torre, with eighty men, held out for a time, but he soon fled across the bay to Castro. Frémont offered to meet the latter in a decisive battle, but the challenge was declined.

Digitized by Google

Summer was now advancing. The Fourth of July, 1846, was a memorable day at Sonoma, California, where, in the presence of a large number of people, including many American settlers, Captain Frémont declared the independence of the country, and unfurled the free state flag of California, a grizzly bear on a field of white.

In these movements Frémont had broken the power of the Indians, averting disaster from that source, and he virtually had expelled the Mexicans from Northern California. A few days later, while en route to Santa Clara, he learned from a messenger that Commodore Stockton, acting in supposed conformity with the former's instructions, had taken Monterey on July 7. On the morning of July 11 the stars and stripes were raised over the old fort, saluted amid ringing cheers, and the famous Bear Flag War had ended.

The motive which Frémont had in waging this aggressive policy is once more a puzzle to many scholars, and the old theory that he was acting in direct collusion with the Federal Government again confronts us.

Moving down the coast with one hundred and sixty mounted riflemen, Frémont reached Mon-

Digitized by Google

terey on July 19. Castro fled southward. An extract from the diary of Lieutenant Frederick Walpole, of the British Navy, taken from his book, "Four Years in the Pacific in Her Majesty's Ship 'Collingwood,' from 1844 to 1848," is here presented. Says Walpole:

During our stay in Monterey, Captain Frémont and his party arrived. They naturally excited curiosity. Here were true trappers, the class that produced the heroes of Fenimore Cooper's best works. These men had passed years in the wilds, living upon their own resources. They were a curious set. A vast cloud of dust appeared first, and thence in long file emerged this wildest wild party. Frémont rode ahead, a spare, active looking man, with such an eye! He was dressed in a blouse and leggings and wore a felt hat. After him came five Delaware Indians, who were his bodyguard and who have been with him through all his wanderings. They had charge of two baggage horses. The rest, many of them blacker than the Indians, rode two and two, the rifle held by one hand across the pommel of the saddle. Thirty-nine of them are his regular men; the rest are loafers picked up lately. His original men are principally backwoodsmen from the State of Tennessee and the banks of the upper waters of the Missouri. He has one or two with him who enjoy a high reputation on the prairies. Kit Carson is as well known there as the duke is in Europe.

The dress of these men was principally a long,

Digitized by Google

loose coat of deerskin, tied with thongs in front; trousers of the same, of their own manufacture, which, when wet through, they take off, scrape well inside with a knife and put on as soon as dry. They are allowed no liquor; tea and sugar only. This no doubt has much to do with their good conduct, and the discipline, too, is very strict. The butts of the trappers' rifles resemble a Turkish musket and therefore fit lightly to the shoulder. They are very long and very heavy, carrying a ball of size about thirty-eight to the pound. A stick a little longer than the barrel is carried in the bore, in which it fits tightly; this keeps the bullet from moving, and, in firing, which they do in a crouching position, they use it as a rest.

To take a brief survey of naval operations, Commodore Sloat, with an American fleet, and Admiral Seymour, with a British squadron, had for some weeks been anchored at Mazatlan, off the Mexican Coast. As narrated in the story of Stockton, Sloat received news of the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Mexico in May, 1846, and he started for California, reaching Monterey on July 2, followed later by the British. As further told in the Stockton story, "Sloat was cautious and indecisive, apparently fearing to risk any sort of complications. On the fifth he was informed by Commodore Montgomery, of the U. S. S. 'Portsmouth,'

Digitized by Google

then stationed in San Francisco Bay, of Frémont's bold operations, and, assuming that the former was acting under specific instructions, Sloat seized Monterey and raised the American flag on July 7."

Seymour arrived with the English fleet about July 15. Many writers of that time think that the decisive action inaugurated by Frémont and sustained by Commodore Sloat again prevented trouble with Great Britain, and thus avoided a possible disaster. This notion, however, may well be questioned, and historians still lack the proof that England had any ambitious designs upon California. Her fleet was there, it is true, in the interests of their home Government, and, had California been abandoned to its fate, the British might have accepted an easy opportunity and taken possession. They would have been foolish not to have done so. That they desired California badly enough to risk any complications with the United States is a mere presumption without support. In so far as the glories of the conquest go, Frémont deserves the greatest share of the honors, for it was he who first took possession of the country and raised the American flag.

Digitized by Google

Late in July, 1846, Sloat retired from active service in favor of a younger man. It is a well-known fact that his successor, the energetic Stockton, at once entered into hearty coöperation with Frémont for the permanent conquest of the region — orders or no orders. Under Stockton the latter was also to receive a number of successive appointments, first as major of the California battalion, then military commandant, and finally governor and commander-in-chief.

The scene now shifts to the south. Embarking his men on the warship "Cyane," Frémont sailed for San Diego, where he landed, and at once marched toward the capital, Stockton and his party having previously arrived at San Pedro. Since Castro and Pico had fled to Sonora, there was no opposition, and, on August 13, the combined American forces entered Los Angeles in triumph. Four days later the conquest of California was proclaimed.

Early in September Frémont left Los Angeles to go to the Sacramento country, but scarcely had he departed before the Southern California Revolt broke out. This trouble was further aggravated by an invasion of one thousand Walla Walla Indians from the north, who were said to

Digitized by Google

be advancing toward Sutter's Fort. Having assembled several hundred men as a part of his plans to organize a California battalion, Frémont chose three trusty companions and went directly to the Walla Walla camp. On his arrival he found that the Indian scare had been badly exaggerated. The warriors easily were pacified, and a number of them even enlisted in his command.

On October 12 Frémont and his men arrived at San Francisco, and sailed down the coast to Monterey, where they disembarked. While there he was notified of his appointment to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the United States Army.

In the meantime the insurrection in the south was becoming more and more formidable. A force of native Californians had defeated four hundred soldiers and marines, under Mervine and Gillespie, while the latter were attempting to reach Los Angeles from San Pedro. The rebels had already taken Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Barbara, at which latter place United States Consul Larkin was made a prisoner. Frémont at once started overland for the scene of trouble, his battalion now comprising four hundred mounted men and three pieces of artillery.

Digitized by Google

At San Juan, on November 29, they were joined by a party of emigrants. Concerning this remarkable organization Edwin Bryant wrote, in 1849:

> The men composing the California battalion have been drawn from many sources and are roughly clad and weather-beaten in their exterior appearance, but I feel it but justice to state my belief that no military party ever passed through an enemy's country and observed the same strict regard for the population. I never heard of an outrage or even a trespass being committed by one of the American volunteers during our entire march. Every American appeared to understand perfectly the duty which he owed to himself and to others in this respect, and the deportment of the battalion might be cited as a model for imitation.

After a march of one hundred and fifty miles San Luis Obispo was reached and captured, and with it Don Jesus Pico, a prominent revolutionist.

From December 27, 1846, to January 3, 1847, the battalion recruited at Santa Barbara. On January 11, while on the march, Frémont was informed that Stockton's forces had taken Los Angeles. Pushing on with his men he soon reached the capital, where he was at once chosen American commissioner to make peace with the subdued rebels. The native citizens preferred

Digitized by Google

negotiating with Frémont, rather than with Stockton, because of the former's popularity, and they were, no doubt, influenced by the urging of Jesus Pico, who had been pardoned and treated kindly by the former.

Articles of peace were determined upon on January 13, 1847. By the terms of this treaty, all the Californians were pardoned for their past hostilities. They were to give up their private arms, and were not to take up arms again during the war between the United States and Mexico; furthermore, they were to assist in preserving peace and tranquility.

Such, in brief, was the "capitulation of Cahuenga," which terminated the war, in so far as California was concerned, and which marked a significant step in the winning of the Southwest.

That Frémont's California battalion was of inestimable value in crushing this revolt none can question. That Frémont's boldness and decisiveness of action, coupled with a prudent, conciliatory spirit, were of vast import in tranquilizing California when a revolt might well have lingered in the retreats of the Sierras, historians must agree.

Concerning the official difficulties between Fré-

Digitized by Google

mont and Kearny, this story will not linger. Briefly stated, Frémont was technically convicted of insubordination in January, 1848, but he was at once pardoned by the President, and restored to official rank, from which he formally resigned a month later.

Frémont's fourth expedition, which was attempted at his own expense, but backed by a number of public spirited men of St. Louis, started on October 19, 1848. This trip is of but incidental importance here, save for the fact that it led to his purchasing a large tract of land, known as the Mariposa grant, which later proved a source of great wealth to him.

California was admitted to the Union on September 9, 1850, and her first senators were John C. Frémont and William M. Gwin. Frémont drew the short term, which extended only until March 4, 1851, and, as he could not be present for the regular term, his actual senatorial career lasted but twenty-one days, from September 9 to 30, when Congress adjourned. Yet, during that brief interval, he championed no fewer than eighteen bills which were of vast benefit to California. Among these measures was a bill to provide for recording California land titles, a bill

Digitized by Google

to regulate working of mines in California, a bill to grant six townships for a university, and a bill to provide for opening a road across the continent.

In August, 1853, he started on his fifth and last expedition, which was backed jointly by himself and his father-in-law. In this exploration the problem was to solve the feasibility of a transcontinental railroad, and Frémont was particularly anxious to ascertain the extent to which snow and winter weather would impede railway traffic in the mountains. The party suffered great hardships, but finally returned to civilization in the spring of 1854.

In 1856 Frémont was nominated by the Republicans for the Presidency, his nomination being due to his general ability, his renown gained as an explorer, and his well-known opposition to the extension of slavery. In the electoral count he drew one hundred and fourteen votes, against one hundred and seventy-four for his opponent, Buchanan.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Frémont was appointed a major-general, and served with honors until June, 1862, when he withdrew from the service for personal and political reasons.

Digitized by Google

He again was nominated for the Presidency by a fraction of the Republican party, in 1864, but, finding slender support in a contest against Lincoln, he prudently withdrew. From 1878 to 1882 he was Territorial Governor of Arizona. Early in 1890 he was appointed a major-general on the retired list by a special act of Congress. He died on July 13, 1890.

In summarizing his work as an explorer, the St. Louis *Intelligencer* once said:

> The career of Frémont has been characteristically Western and American, at a time when the great work of Western Americans is to subdue the wilderness. He is a mightier Daniel Boone on a far more magnificent theater, and he adds to the sturdy qualities of the pioneer of civilization those graces and attainments of science and literature which only the highest civilization can confer.

His efforts in behalf of California cannot better be expressed than in his own words, which were once spoken in self-vindication:

> My acts in California have all been with high motives and a desire for public service. My scientific labors did something to open California to the knowledge of my countrymen; its geography had been a sealed book. My military operations were conquests without bloodshed; my civil administra-

Digitized by Google

tion was for the public good. I offer California, during my administration, for comparison with the most tranquil portions of the United States.

The public career of John C. Frémont is the common heritage of this nation.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

REC'D LD
JUN 4 1961

NOV 9 1967 9 2

15Dec'64VB

NOV 9'67-12 M
LOAN DEPT.

REC'D LD
DEC 1 '64-3 PM

JAN 13 1967 76

MAR 25 1969 5 0
RECEIVED

DEC 30'66-5 PM
LOAN DEPT.

MAR 11'69-10 PM
LOAN DEPT.

DEC 18 1989

AUTO DISC NOV 18 1989

Digitized by Google

) 21A-50m-12,'60
(6221s10)476B

General Library
University of California

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C022736049

320821
F486
B8
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Digitized by Google